

LUFTWAFFE COLOURS

Volume Two Section 1



JAGDWAFFE

Eric Mombeek

With David Wadman
& Eddie J.Creek

BATTLE OF
BRITAIN

Phase One

July-August 1940





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The study of Luftwaffe camouflage and markings is a complex subject, compounded by the general lack of quality colour photographs; inevitably therefore, most photographs appearing in this series are black and white and both the authors and publishers have offered their own interpretation of the colours they represent. We recognise that readers may have contrary opinions. Throughout Classic Colours, we have endeavoured to include as many unpublished photos and as much associated information as possible, included are many variations of personal emblems and unit badges. In many instances these have been produced in colour to the best of the publisher's, authors' and artist's interpretations. Furthermore it should be stressed that the personal accounts contained in this series are as they have been related to the authors and are the product of the individual pilot's personal memories.

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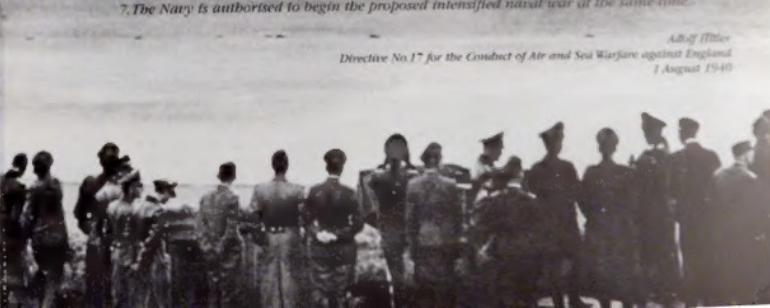
BATTLE OF BRITAIN PHASE ONE 1940

In order to establish the necessary conditions for the final conquest of England I intend to intensify air and sea warfare against the English homeland. I therefore order as follows:

1. The German Air Force is to overpower the English Air Force with all the forces at its command, in the shortest time possible. The attacks are to be directed primarily against flying units, their ground installations and their supply organisations, but also against the aircraft industry, including that manufacturing anti-aircraft equipment.
2. After achieving temporary or local air superiority the air war is to be continued against ports, in particular against stores of food, and also against stores of provisions in the interior of the country. Attacks on the south coast ports will be made on the smallest scale, in view of our own forthcoming operations.
3. On the other hand, air attacks on enemy warships and merchant ships may be reduced except where some particularly favourable target happens to present itself, where such attacks would lend additional effectiveness to those mentioned in paragraph 2, or where such attacks are necessary for the training of aircrews for further operations.
4. The intensified air warfare will be carried out in such a way that the Air Force can at any time be called upon to give adequate support to naval operations against suitable targets. It must also be ready to take part in full force in Operation Sealion.
5. I reserve to myself the right to decide on terror attacks as measures of reprisal.
6. The intensification of the air war may begin on or after 5 August. The exact time is to be decided by the Air Force after the completion of preparations and in light of the situation.
7. The Navy is authorised to begin the proposed intensified naval war at the same time.

Adolf Hitler

Directive No. 17 for the Conduct of Air and Sea Warfare against England
1 August 1940



June-August 1940

Invasion?

"The British have lost the war, but they don't know it; one must give them time and they will come round."

Adolf Hitler commanding to General Alfred Jodl following the Franco-German Armistice in June 1940

June 1940 and Germany was riding the crest of a wave. Virtually everything in the campaigns against France and the Low Countries had gone according to plan. In a period of less than two months much of Western Europe had been brought under German occupation and control. All that now stood between Germany and complete domination of the whole area was Great Britain. A victorious Adolf Hitler, although preoccupied with his thoughts on the conquest of Russia, now looked for a rapid and favourable decision in the war against Britain and retained the hope that a negotiated settlement with her could be reached. However, as it became increasingly clear that no such agreement would be forthcoming, his attention began to focus on the forceful subjugation of the island kingdom, including if necessary, its invasion and occupation.

With no indication that a peaceful settlement of any kind would be reached, the OKW was now given the task of preparing for and, if necessary, achieving the successful invasion of Great Britain. For an invasion to succeed, it would have to take place within a three-month period of anticipated good weather under complete air superiority, and before the onset of the autumnal gales.

"The near future will show whether Britain will do the reasonable thing in the light of our victories or will try to carry on the war alone. In the latter case the war will involve Britain's destruction and may last a long time."

General Franz Halder, diary entry 22 June 1940.

RIGHT: The Bf 109 E-3 belonging to Hptm. Günther Lützow, Kommandeur of 1/JG 3 at Montécouvez in May 1940.

Note the early-style canopy, the six black victory bars on the rudder and the green "Tatzebär" on the nose with black, red and white stripes. The fuselage code is believed to be Black-Green 70. There is no fuselage motif and the aircraft carries a standard fuselage Balkenkreuz and Rüstschild.

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 Hptm. Günther Lützow Gruppenkommandeur I./JG 3

The Bf 109 E-3 of the Gruppenkommandeur of I./JG 3, Hptm. Günther Lützow as seen at Montécouvez in late May. Flashed in a high demarcation 02/T1 scheme it carried the Gruppenkommandeur symbol ahead of the fuselage Balkenkreuz and the JG 3 "Tatzebär" on the cowling in the Stab colour of green. The six Abschuss bars on the rudder are believed to have been black and the splinter black-green.



June-August 1940

Phase One • 3



ABOVE AND LEFT: After being hospitalised when he was shot down on 21 May, De Frech Mix returned to I.JG 2 on 19 June. Once back in France, he took the opportunity to visit the home of his old unit, 8.(KG) 125 where it still lay in a field near Baye. Clearly visible in these photographs are the black-outlined Gruppe symbol and the Geschwader shield with its stylised W. On the Rüstschild, the Gruppe's heraldic animal, which had been designed for the unit by Leutnant Roskies.

With their record of military successes, it is not surprising that both Hitler and the OKW General Staff retained a purely continental view of carrying out such an invasion; an operation which they likened to a powerful river crossing on a broad front with the Luftwaffe taking the place of artillery. It was believed that the well-proven Blitzkrieg tactic, i.e. destruction of the opposing air force, followed by the rapid advance of the German Army with its powerful and direct air-support would also succeed against Great Britain. There was, however, one major difference – the Royal Air Force; it was the single most powerful air force yet encountered by the *Luftwaffe*. Bearing this and their recent successes against other European air forces in mind, the Oberkommando der *Luftwaffe* estimated that its complete destruction would take longer than the 12 to 48 hours taken to defeat each of the air forces fought previously. Furthermore, it was known that the British would put up a fierce and determined fight in defence of their homeland. Based on these calculations, the OKW predicted that, in the event that an invasion should take place, a period of four days would be needed to secure total air superiority in the immediate invasion area. It further anticipated that in the wake of a successful invasion, the complete destruction of the Royal Air Force could be achieved within a period of no more than three weeks. The key to the successful completion of any invasion, however, would be German supremacy in the air.

"The landing in England, prepared down to the smallest detail, could not be attempted before the British air arm was completely beaten."

General Alfred Jodl, München, November 1940

June-August 1940



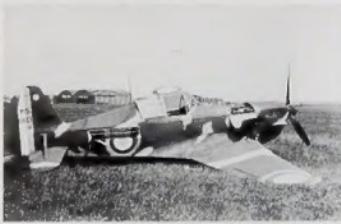
ABOVE: A German soldier poses for a photograph in the cockpit of a French Caudron 711 fighter following the fall of France. The Polish national markings on the fuselage suggest that it belonged to the group of Polish volunteer pilots who fought in the Battle of France.



ABOVE: Abandoned French Caudron fighters formerly used by Polish volunteer pilots.



ABOVE: A damaged French Morane-Saulnier MS406C lies abandoned on an unidentified airfield following the fall of France.



ABOVE: A Dornier D.520 belonging to Gruppe 204 24 GC 1/25 shot down during the battle of France. This was the first and only unit to operate the type, which became operational on 11 May 1940.



RIGHT: The remnants of France's once proud and powerful air force are collected at different locations throughout the country to be processed as scrap. The aircraft in the foreground is a Farman F.222.

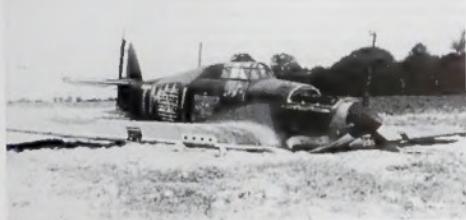
June-August 1940



ABOVE: An RAF Bristol Blenheim light bomber abandoned at an unidentified French location during the British withdrawal from France.



ABOVE: SS troops examine the wreckage of an RAF Heinkel He 111 shot down in northern France or Belgium during the early summer of 1940.



LEFT: An early production Hawker Hurricane Mk. I (note the early 'pope' serial mark) of 504 Sqn, Royal Auxiliary Air Force lies abandoned after force landing in a field somewhere in the West in the early summer of 1940. Note that souvenir hunters have been at work.

BELOW: Fairey Battles of 103 Sqn of the RAF's Advanced Air Striking Force were stationed at Bertheville during the early summer of 1940. This aircraft was shot down during the battle of France and has attracted the curiosity of German personnel.



ABOVE: Throughout the fighting over Dunkirk and the offensive patrols over the French and Belgian coasts, RAF Fighter Command committed its Spitfires to flying patrols. This photograph shows a 61 Sqn Spitfire which ended its days in a French field, providing a source of interest for local Luftwaffe personnel.



A confident and nervous Hitler, on 19 July, Hermann Göring delivers an address to a fighter unit somewhere in France during the malaise over 'Studie Blau'.

'Studie Blau' (Case Blue)

In 1940 the Luftwaffe was undoubtedly the most powerful air force in the world but the German intelligence system was disorganised and inefficient. It was against this background that on 1 January 1938 Abteilung 5, the Intelligence section of the Luftwaffe General Staff was formed, tasked with the collection of information on foreign air forces and the preparation of target information for use in any future air war. Command of Abteilung 5 as Chief IC (Intelligence) was given to Major Joseph Schmid who, although a shrewd and ambitious man, had no foreign language skills and was not a pilot. It is perhaps significant of the value placed on intelligence by the Luftwaffe that the appointment required only the rank of Major. For the last few months of 1938 and the first half of 1939, Schmid and members of Abteilung 5 carried out studies on Poland, Russia and England. While the preliminary work on England was being undertaken, an order was received from the Commander in Chief of the Luftwaffe, Hermann Göring, demanding a high priority study of the air and industrial armaments capability of Great Britain. This subject was considered so important that a study committee was formed with Erhard Milch, Ernst Udet and Hans Jeschonnek as permanent members and Schmid as chairman. The result of this study was a full report on Britain that appeared in July 1939 under the title of 'Studie Blau' (Case Blue). For most of the Second World War, this document would provide the basic reference material on which attacks against England were planned.

While realising that, militarily, England was an enemy to be respected, Schmid had already begun to underestimate the efficiency and potential of the RAF. During the latter part of 1939, he devoted most of his time to formulating an offensive plan against England which would severely damage her, regardless of the outcome of the campaign against France. In late November 1939, this document was issued under the title 'Proposal for the Conduct of Air Warfare against Great Britain'. Although far-sighted, it was probably the last study in which Schmid was able to make an objective and accurate forecast concerning Britain. While the theme of this study concentrated on the strangulation of Britain's ocean supply lines and harbour facilities he neglected to take into account two very important factors; the potential danger of the British radar chain and the lack of German maritime and torpedo bombers.



Hermann Göring confers with his friend Ernst Udet (second from right), Josef Schmid (second from left) and an unnamed Luftwaffe officer. Both Udet and Schmid were members of the study committee set up to assess the feasibility of operations against Great Britain. It was Schmid who, as Göring's Chief of Intelligence, was largely responsible for the erroneous 'Studie Blau'.



Oberst Josef 'Beppo' Schmid, the architect of the flawed 'Studie Blau'.

As the time passed, Schmid concentrated on 'Studie Blau' and the mass of information captured by Germany with the fall of France. On 16 July 1940, having compiled and studied all of the available background information, Schmid completed an overall survey on the qualities of the RAF and on which the coming offensive would be based. Aside from containing numerous misleading and inaccurate statements regarding the military and operational capabilities of the RAF, the study omitted any reference whatsoever to the closely-knit British defence system with its radar stations, operations rooms and complex HF and VHF radio network. In conclusion, Schmid stated that "... The Luftwaffe is in a position to go over to decisive daylight operations owing to the inadequate air defences of the island."

Enigma Ultra decrypts and the Battle of Britain

In addition to an established defensive warning system, Britain had one other measure that she could employ in her defence - decoded transcripts of German signals traffic sent by the Enigma coding system. First coming into use during the summer of 1940, the 'Ultra decrypts' as they became known, were useful to the planning of RAF strategy but did not offer the scope of material that would become available as the war progressed. As the Luftwaffe proceeded to follow Göring's orders, they found defending RAF fighters were nearly always there to meet them, in the right place, and, whenever possible, in significant numbers. Directed not only by the chain of RDF stations and radio communications, they were also guided by information obtained from the contents of decoded signals intercepted from the flow of Enigma traffic between the OKL and Luftwaffe units. This access to German planning strategy allowed the head of RAF Fighter Command, Air Chief Marshal Dowding and his Group Commanders, to apportion their resources accordingly and stem the Luftwaffe onslaught.

RIGHT: The Bowdery Chain Home Low (CHL) station which came into operation in September 1936.

By February 1940, a total of twenty-nine R.D.F. stations had been completed around the coast of Britain. These lattice towers provided a primary line of sentinels for watching and reporting enemy activity. There were 21 Chain Home (CH) and 50 Chain Home Low (CHL) stations plus a number of smaller ones which could be used to plug gaps made by enemy attack. These towers could only detect out to sea and had no ability to look over land behind.



BELOW: LEFT TO RIGHT
Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, A.O.C. in C. of R.A.F. Fighter Command.
Air Vice-Marshal Sir Christopher Quinton Brand, A.O.C. No. 10 Group R.A.F. Fighter Command.

Air Vice-Marshal Keith Park, A.O.C. No. 11 Group R.A.F. Fighter Command.
Air Vice-Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory, A.O.C. No. 12 Group R.A.F. Fighter Command.

Air Vice-Marshal Keith Park, A.O.C. No. 11 Group R.A.F. Fighter Command.



Although the decrypts of the *Lufwaffe's* intentions clearly had an impact on the final outcome of the Battle, exactly how far they contributed to the ultimate victory of the RAF during 1940 remains an ongoing topic of discussion amongst historians to this day.

Preparation: July 1940

Uⁿtil the end of the campaign in the West, the air war against Great Britain had been carried out on a limited scale, being confined for the most part to mine-laying, attacks against merchant and naval shipping and attacks on targets of a secondary nature. Then in June 1940, with the countries of Western Europe under German occupation, the circumstances changed. The airfields and installations of occupied Europe provided every facility to allow the full strength of the *Lufwaffe* to be strategically deployed against Britain. However, despite being in such an advantageous position, the *Lufwaffe* was faced with a formidable task, one that begged the question; "If Britain fought on, could air power alone defeat her?" In supporting the Army in its march across Europe, the *Lufwaffe* had played an important and decisive role in the tactic of *Bitzrieg*. There it had been used to open each offensive by destroying the opposing air force in the air or on the ground before joining with the rapid advance of the Army to give powerful and direct air-support wherever needed. But in the mid-summer of 1940, for the first time in its history, the *Lufwaffe* would embark on a course of action that had no precedent in the history of modern warfare. Wholly independent of operations by the remainder of the Wehrmacht, it was to carry out an aerial offensive aimed at decisively defeating an opposing air force and forcing the capitulation of an entire nation.

"At this period, total air war was known only as a theoretical conception. Until then no attempts had ever been made to wage war solely by use of air power. Independently of the Army or Navy, in order to break the fighting spirit of an enemy equipped with modern arms."

The following were the strategic missions imposed on the Lufwaffe:

- a) the blockade of Britain (in conjunction with the Navy) by air attacks on shipping and ports;
- b) softening-up for the Invasion; offensive aimed at gaining air superiority;
- c) forcing Britain to surrender by waging total air war against her."

Comment by General Adolf Galland on the role of the *Lufwaffe* in 1940 in a postwar appraisal of the Battle of Britain, *Air Historical Branch Transaction* 96/121, 1953, p.11

Generalfeldmarschall Hugo Sperrle,
commander of
Luftflotte 3.



The necessary regrouping of *Lufwaffe* forces in preparation for the assault on England showed little change from those used in the Battle for France. *Luftflotte 2* and *3* had simply extended their areas westwards into France with a common boundary at the mouth of the River Seine on the Channel coast. This boundary was then extended northwards through the centre of England to give each *Luftflotte* its own sphere of operations. *Luftflotte 2* under the command of the competent and newly promoted Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring, would operate to the east of this boundary while *Luftflotte 3*, under Generalfeldmarschall Hugo Sperrle, similarly recently promoted, would operate to the west. The subordinated *Fighter Groups* of each *Luftflotte* remained unchanged but for one exception: *Fighter Groups II* and *IV* were interchanged so that



Generalfeldmarschall
Albert Kesselring, the
commander of
Luftflotte 2.

Fighter Groups IV, based in western France with units specialising in the anti-shipping role, would be better placed to operate over the shipping lanes of the Irish Sea and Western Approaches. The Norwegian-based *Luftflotte 5*, under Generaloberst Hans-Jürgen Stumpff, would not play any major role in the early stages of the attack against Britain. However, its bombers and twin-engined fighters would provide valuable widespread anti-shipping and diversionary attacks against Northern England and Scotland which would force the RAF to keep fighter defences in the north, so weakening the aerial defences in the south.

A second change introduced with this regrouping assembled the single and twin-engined fighter units from the *Fighter Groups* of each *Luftflotte* into two tactical fighter commands. Known as "Jagdflüher" or "Jäfis" with *Jäf 2* under *Luftflotte 2* and *Jäf 3* under *Luftflotte 3*, these commands were able to retain a measure of independence in the planning of escort duties and fighter sweeps

BELOW: The headquarters of Jagdfliegerführer (Jäf) 2 at Le Touquet, south of Boulogne during the summer of 1940.



ABOVE: Oberst Theo Osterkamp was appointed Jagdfliegerführer (Jäf) 2 in July 1940 and in such a capacity was responsible for the tactical command of JG 26, JG 52, JG 54 and ZG 26.

LEFT: Adolf Galland and Werner Mölders with Oberst Theo Osterkamp. Osterkamp a veteran of the First World War, became Jagdfliegerführer (Jäf) 2 on 27 July 1940.

within the operational setting of their respective *Luftflotte*. While similar in purpose to the Fighter Groups of the RAF that they were to face in the coming battles, they lacked any means or procedure for plotting the position of enemy aircraft, nor had they any method for controlling their own fighters once airborne. Therefore, although performing the function of an operational command, aerial operations were flown without any guidance or additional direction from their ground facilities. This disadvantage would undermine the whole effort of the *Lufwaffe* Fighter Arm.

The Luftwaffe Plan of Campaign July 1940

Within the overall framework of the OKW's plans for the invasion of Great Britain, the two major tasks assigned to the *Lufwaffe* appeared straightforward enough: neutralisation of the RAF as a fighting force and the suppression of sea-borne supplies to Britain by attacks on its ports and shipping. *Luftflotte 2* and *3* were to achieve and maintain air superiority over southern and south-eastern England while *Luftflotte 5* carried out diversionary attacks against Scotland and northern England to prevent some of the defending fighter squadrons from reinforcing those in the south.

Orders issued by the OKW operations staff to the three *Luftflotten* made it clear how these objectives would be met. In the first phase which would continue until the end of the first week in August, the *Lufwaffe* would attack British defences and carry out attacks against merchant and naval shipping, port



A German Army band parades along Smith Street in St. Peter Port, Guernsey at the beginning of July 1940 following the occupation of the island.

1-20 July

In the broadest sense – and with some justification – it may be said that the Battle of Britain began on 30 June 1940. On that day, German forces had landed unopposed on the island of Guernsey, the largest of the four Channel Islands. Within the next 24 hours, this small group of islands, all sovereign territory of Great Britain, would be under full German control. By the end of July, an operational Luftwaffe landing ground had been established at the airfield on Guernsey and would be the only airfield on British soil to be used by the Luftwaffe during the Second World War. It would be from here that elements of JG 27 and a Staffel of Major Freiherr von Maltzahn's II./JG 53 would operate against Britain's defenders during the coming battle.



Shortly after the British evacuation at Dunkirk, Lt Julius Meinberg and Obi 'Assi' Hahn of JG 2 flew from Chouilly to Guernsey. This photograph of Meinberg with a British policeman – or 'Bobby' – and an unknown German soldier on Guernsey was taken by Hahn.

facilities and selected industrial targets. This would be followed by an intensified second phase; a six week major aerial offensive designed to destroy the infrastructure and defensive capabilities of the RAF, neutralise the British coastal defences, wear down initial resistance, destroy military reserves behind the main defences and protect the build-up of invasion forces. This second phase would begin on a day given the code name 'Adler Tag' – 'Eagle Day', the date of which would be determined by the first period of fine weather following the end of the initial phase. The prime objective, however, would be the neutralisation of the RAF and its ground organisation by attacking its aircraft, especially fighters, on the ground and in the air, and attacks against bases and supply installations and against its supporting industry. Once this second phase had been completed in southern England, the offensive, in keeping with the intended OKW plan, would then be extended northwards in a series of stages.

During the third week of July, the *Luftwaffe* was ordered to a state of full readiness and the final details and operational orders were worked out. The unit strength returns from the three *Luftruppen* for this week gave them a total of 2,076 serviceable aircraft of which 656 were single-engined fighters and 168 twin-engined fighters. Ranged against them was a total of 1,519 serviceable RAF aircraft of which 606 were single-engined fighters and 101 twin-engined fighters. The stage was now set for a battle that had no precedent in the history of warfare; the greatest and probably most decisive aerial battle ever fought.



Service personnel examine the remains of a Bf 109 E of 3.JG 2 which was brought down near Sandwich, Kent, on the evening of 8 July 1940. The pilot, Lta Albert Strüber, baled out and was taken prisoner. Just visible on the wreckage is part of the 3.JG 2 mouse emblem which was carried on either side of the rear fuselage.

On the 8th, increased activity over Channel convoys resulted in the loss of three fighters including the first Bf 109 E to come down on British soil. At 15.45 hrs this aircraft, 'White 4', an E-3 of 4./JG 51 flown by Lt. Johane Böhm, force landed at Bladbeen Hill, Elham, Kent after being damaged by a Spitfire of 64 Sqn. This was followed at 19.30 hrs by the second Bf 109 to crash in Britain, this time an aircraft from 3.JG 2 which was shot down by 54 Sqn and crashed near Sandwich, Kent. The pilot, Lt. Albert Strüber, was captured after bailing out. An aircraft from III./JG 51 was also lost in action on this date with a fourth from II./JG 21 being damaged in combat with 610 Sqn. The 9th again saw increased fighter activity over the Thames Estuary and Channel but, despite RAF claims for two Bf 109s shot down, only one, from II./JG 51, was recorded as being lost.

"...we saw me almost immediately and rolled out of his turn towards me so that a head-on attack became inevitable. Using both hands on the control column to steady the aircraft and thus keep my aim steady, I peered through the reflector sight at the rapidly closing enemy aircraft. We opened fire together, and immediately a ball of lead thudded into my Spitfire. One moment the Messerschmitt was a clearly defined shape, its wingspan nicely enclosed within the circle of my reflector sight, and the next it was on top of me, a terrifying blur which blotted out the sky ahead. Then we hit."

F/L Al Deere, 54 Sqn, commenting on his head-on collision with Bf 109 of II./JG 51 during a dogfight with the fighter escort for a He 59 of Seefliegerkommando 1 during the evening of 9 July 1940



On 9 July 1940, this Heinkel He 59 float plane (D-ASUO), was forced down on the beachhead south of Pulteney. Allen of 54 Sqn R was later towed to the beach at Deal by the Walmer lifeboat.



The monument at Cap Gris Nez near Wissant was often used as a vantage point by high ranking German officials to observe the British Isles. Behind the monument in this view can be seen a FuG 101 Freya radar station.

Luftwaffe Fighter Disposition during the Battle of Britain – Pas De Calais



Luftwaffe Fighter Disposition during the Battle of Britain – Normandy, Brittany and Channel Islands



On 10 July, the major fighter activity of the day took place over the west-bound convoy 'Bread' in the English Channel. There were no German fighter losses during the morning's fighting but a JG 51 aircraft was claimed as slightly damaged by a Spitfire from 49 Sqn. In the afternoon battles above the convoy, one Bf 109 from 5/JG 51 was lost while a further two from 7./JG 51 were damaged severely enough to result in forced landings in France, both pilots escaping serious injury.

"The whole cockpit stank of burnt insulation but I managed to stretch my glide to the coast, then made a belly-landing close to Cherbourg. As I jumped out the machine was on fire, and within seconds ammunition and fuel went up with a bang!"

Ole Arthur Diez, T/JG 51, commenting on what happened after being hit by fire from a Hurricane flown by Sgt. A.G. Pagan, 56 Sqn during combat over the convoy 'Bread' 10 July 1940.

"Suddenly the sky was full of British fighters. Today we were going to be in for a tough time."

Hans Rehms Fraatz, II/JG 51, commenting on the action over the British convoy 'Bread' 10 July 1940.



ABOVE: An early-style life packer is mounted for use in the cockpit of a Bf 109E fighter in France in the Summer of 1940. Note how the Rennsteig plate - as fitted to the older style hood - adversely affected vision to the rear.



LEFT: Personnel of the Gruppe Kommandeur of III/JG 51 who were involved in the battle with the Defiants of 141 Sqn on 19 July 1940. They are left to right: Obit. Kalin, Adjutant; Obf. Pichon-Kahn von Holt, Technical Officer; Obf. Wehrli and Hptm. Haimes Trautson the Gruppe Kommandeur.

On the 11th, 12th and 13th, attacks on Channel convoys continued resulting in one Bf 109 of 9./JG 51 being shot down near Dover on the evening of the 13th. On the 14th, battles again developed over Channel convoys resulting in the loss of one aircraft from 8./JG 3 and a second from the same Staffel returning to France severely damaged. Although skirmishes continued for the next four days, operations were hampered by bad weather and no further fighters were lost in combat until the 18th when a Bf 109 of II./JG 2 was lost to unspecified reasons during an operational sortie. On the 19th, the day on which Hitler would make his 'Last Appeal to Reason' speech, improving weather resulted in increased fighter activity off Dover. In the early afternoon, the Defiants of 141 Sqn were badly mauled by fighters of III./JG 51 and II./JG 2 for the cost of one aircraft of 9./JG 51 severely damaged. In later actions over Folkestone and Selsey Bill, three more fighters from 9./JG 51 and III./JG 27 were badly damaged with two of the pilots being wounded. Improving weather over the Channel on the 20th saw an early afternoon attack on Dover which claimed two aircraft from 3./JG 27. The Geschwader suffered a third loss during the late afternoon when the Gruppe Kommandeur, Major Riegel, was shot down off the Island of Sark by two Hurricanes of 501 Sqn. Later, in an early evening battle that developed over the convoy 'Bosom,' two more aircraft, both from JG 51, were lost to RAF fighters.

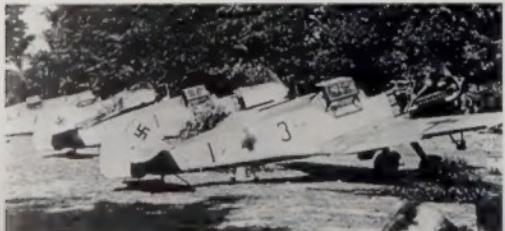


ABOVE:
Pilots of 32 Sqn
photographed at
Hawkinge at the
end of July 1940.
From left to right
they are:
P/O R.E. Smythe,
P/O K.R. Gillman,
P/O F.M. Gardner,
P/O J.L. Proctor,
P/O G.W. Tait,
P/O D.H. Grove and
F/O A. Fletcher.
All would survive
the war except
Keith Gillman, who
on 25 August 1944.

21-31 July

In contrast with the previous day's activity, the 21st was relatively quiet until mid-afternoon when the west-bound convoy "Peewit" came under heavy attack from elements of KG 3 south of the Needles. During the ensuing battle between the fighter escort and the defending fighters, one Bf 109 from 7./JG 27 was lost when it collided with a 43 Sqn Hurricane flown by P/O DeMancha. Both pilots were killed in the collision. A second loss also occurred this day when a Bf 109 from 111./JG 77 was lost for unspecified reasons while on an operational sortie over the North Sea. There was little fighter activity over the Channel on the 22nd and 23rd but on the 24th, Channel convoys were again the focus of Luftwaffe attention. An intense fighter battle developed over a convoy in the Straits of Dover which cost JG 26 three aircraft. Oblt. Werner Bartels, the *Geschwader Technische Offizier* (TO) force-landed near Margate and was taken prisoner. Lt. Josef Schaufuß was killed when his aircraft crashed in Margate and his parachute failed to open and Hptm. Erich Noack, Kommandeur of the second Gruppe, was killed when his Bf 109 crashed while attempting to land at Marquise-East.

Four aircraft from JG 52 were also lost in this action, one of these being Hptm. Wolf-Heinrich von Houwald the Kommandeur of III./JG 52. On the 25th, another ferocious battle took place over a convoy passing through the Dover Straits that would last through most of the afternoon. This action saw the loss of seven fighters; one from 9./JG 26, one from III./JG 27 and four from III./JG 52. The seventh loss recorded for the day was a severely damaged E-1 from 5./JG 51 which was written off after returning to St. Ingelvert. Deteriorating weather over the Channel on the 26th and 27th limited attacks



LEFT: Although the precise date is undocumented, this photograph shows a flight of replacement Bf 109 Es for the Caffiers-based 9./JG 26. As the third Gruppe of JG 26 retained the 111./JG 77 formation Blue 65 finish throughout 1940, the fuselage Balkenkreuz and nosecone were repainted in smaller form to help conceal the aircraft at high altitude.

BELOW: Photographed in July 1940, this view shows the emblem carried on the starboard escape hatch of a Bf 109 F-2. W/Nr. 44032 of the Caffiers-based 17 Sqn. On 24 September, when he was downed by P/O H.A.C. Bird-Wilson it was shot down over the Thames Estuary by Adolf Galland to become his 40th victory. P/O Bird-Wilson although burned, was able to parachute to safety and was admitted to the Royal Naval Hospital at Chatham.



in any strength against convoys and other shipping. On the 27th attacks were carried out against both Dover and the convoy "Bacon" but the only fighter lost in combat during these two days was an aircraft from 2./JG 27, shot down south of Portland by a Hurricane of 238 Sqn at noon on the 26th.

"We were no longer in doubt that the RAF would prove a formidable opponent."

Afrik. Galant, W/JG 26, commenting on his first combat over the English Channel, 24 July 1940

Despite better weather over the Channel on Sunday 28th, no concentrated attacks on shipping developed until early afternoon when an incoming raid was detected heading for Dover, in the battle that followed one machine from 2./JG 51 was lost and two others badly damaged, of which one was flown by the *Geschwaderkommodore*, Major Werner Mölders. Also involved in the fighting this day was the highly respected and popular South African from 74 Sqn, F/Lt. A.G. "Sailor" Malan. While some sources have credited Malan with damaging the Bf 109 flown by Mölders, others credit the action to F/Lt. J.W.T. Webster of 41 Sqn. Although a detailed study of combat reports for this engagement suggests that Malan may have been responsible, it is far more conceivable that the damage was actually inflicted by Webster.

"North of Dover we met some low-flying Spitfires. I shot down a Spitfire in flames. But now I found myself in the middle of a clump of Englishmen and they were very angry with me. They all rushed at me and that was my good luck. As they all tried to earn cheap laurels at the expense of one German, they got in each other's way. Well, I managed to manoeuvre among them and made them even more confused. Nevertheless, I couldn't avoid being hit. Bullets besattered my aircraft. The radiator and fuel tank were shot up badly and I had to make a getaway as quickly as possible. Luckily my engine had not failed to the French coast, then it began to misfire. When I wanted to land, the undercarriage wouldn't work. There was nothing to do but land without it. I made a smooth belly landing."

Major Werner Mölders, Stab./JG 21, commenting on his first combat over the Chaxes, 29 July 1940

With more fine weather early on the morning of the 29th, Dover harbour and two Channel convoys were targeted by the Luftwaffe. A heavy raid in the early morning was directed at Dover but was driven off by the anti-aircraft and fighter defences and afternoon attacks carried out against the two convoys caused little damage. Activity over the Channel on this day resulted in four fighters being severely damaged in combat. Of these four, one from 1./JG 51 crashed at Wissant and one from 6./JG 51 crashed outside Calais with both pilots being killed. The two other aircraft from II./JG 27 and 4./JG 51 force-landed without injury to either pilot. With low cloud and light rain covering most of Britain on the 30th, air activity was greatly reduced and no Bf 109s were lost. Although the weather began to improve on the 31st, hazy conditions frustrated operations. Later that afternoon two Staffeln of Bf 109s from JG 2 shooting up barrage balloons in the Dover area were intercepted by Spitfires of 74 Sqn. None were shot down but one Bf 109 was damaged and force-landed at Fécamp with a seized engine.



ABOVE: A Bf 109 pulls away after shooting down one of the Dover barrage balloons during the afternoon of 31 July 1940.

1-12 August



**"Why marry now when there is only England left?
Marry later to celebrate the victory."**

Major Werner Mölders, Stab/JG 51, replying to
a request from one of his pilots seeking leave to marry, 7 August 1940

An undated photo of Werner Mölders, flight in flight pack and gloves, in conversation with other members of JG 51.

On the morning of the 8th and marking the start of a distinct new phase of attacks, the west-bound convoy 'Peeewi' was subjected to a series of attacks more intensive than any made against convoys during the preceding month. During the course of the day, three furious air battles took place over and around the convoy. At the end of the day's fighting, nine fighters had been lost with a further eight damaged to varying degrees. Of the units taking part, II./JG 27 suffered the most casualties with four aircraft lost and two damaged, one of these losses being the Gruppenkommandeur, Hptm. Werner Andres who survived ditching his aircraft and was later rescued from the Channel by the Seenotdienst.

"The enemy fighters, which were painted silver, were half-rolling and diving and zooming in climbing turns. I fired five two-second bursts at one and saw it dive into the sea. Then I followed another up a zoom and got him as he stalled"

S/Ldr. John Peel, 145 Sqn commenting on
the battle above the convoy 'Peeewi' 8 August 1940

S/LDR. JOHN PEEL (BRITISH), 145 SQN. RAF

John Peel was born on 17 October 1911 and entered the RAF College at Cranwell as a Flight Cadet in September 1930. He graduated in July 1932 and joined 19 Sqn at Duxford shortly after. In January 1934, he was posted to 801 (Fleet Fighter) Sqn, flying alternatively from the airfield at Upavon or from the carrier HMS *Furious*. He joined 601 Sqn, Royal Auxiliary Air Force, in September 1935 where he spent time as a flying instructor before moving on to a staff position at Cranwell in July 1936. He returned to 601 Sqn in September 1937.

In July 1940, while serving on the staff of the Postings Section of the Air Ministry, Peel was given command of 145 Sqn. On the 7th of that month, he shared in the destruction of a Do 17. On the 11th, Peel is believed to have shot down either a Bf 109 or a Do 17, but was himself shot down in this action. He ditched in the Channel off Selsey Bill and was rescued by the Selsey lifeboat.

On the 17th, he claimed a Ju 88 as damaged and shared in the destruction of another Do 17 on the 19th. Again, on the 29th he shared in the destruction of a Ju 88 and on 8 August claimed two Ju 87s and one Bf 109 destroyed. He was awarded the DFC on 30 August. On 16 December he left 145 Sqn for a brief period before returning again as its commanding officer in November 1941. He survived the war to retire from the RAF on 20 January 1948 with the rank of Group Captain.



F/LT. ADOLF GYSBERT 'SAILOR' MALAN (SOUTH AFRICAN), 74 SQN. RAF

Born in Wellington, South Africa on 3 October 1910, Adolph Gysbert Malan became a cadet on the training ship *General Botha* in February 1924 and joined the Union Castle Steamship Line in 1927. In 1935, he applied for and received a short service commission in the RAF and began his flying training at No 2 E & RTFS Filton on 1 January 1936. From Filton, he went on to No 3 FTS at Grantham, was posted to 407 Sqn at Hornchurch on 20 December 1936, and was promoted to Flight Commander in late 1937.

Near Dunkirk on 21 May 1940, he destroyed a Ju 88, claimed the probable destruction of a He 111 and damaged a second Ju 88. On the 24th, shared in a victory over a Do 17 and claimed a He 111 destroyed. On the 27th of that month, he claimed one Bf 109 destroyed, shared a probable Do 17 and damaged two others. He was awarded the DFC on 11 June.

During the night of the 18/19 of June, he destroyed two He 111s and on 12 July, he shared in the destruction of a third. On the 19th, he claimed the probable destruction of a Bf 109. On the 25th, he claimed another Bf 109 as damaged and on the 28th, destroyed one Bf 109, claimed a second as damaged and on the 15th claimed the destruction of one, and possibly two Do 17s. On 11 September, he destroyed a Do 17 and claimed a second downed on 17 October, claimed a Bf 109 as a probable. On the 22nd, he destroyed a Bf 109 which was followed by the destruction of another on the 23rd. He destroyed one Bf 109 and shared in the destruction of another on the 27th and claimed a further Bf 109 on 2 December. He was awarded the DSO on 24 December.

On 21 July 1941, Malan was awarded a Bar to his DSO and in October of that year, was sent on a tour of the USA with five other pilots to lecture and liaise with the US Army Air Corps. He survived the war to retire with the rank of Group Captain and returned with his family to South Africa in 1946. In addition to his British awards, he was awarded the French and Belgian Croix de Guerre, the French Legion d'Honneur and the Czech Military Cross. He died in South Africa on 17 September 1965.



Activity over the Channel on the 9th and 10th was slight and no fighters were lost on operations, although a Bf 109 of 1./JG 53 was written off on the 9th when it hit a Flak emplacement while making an emergency landing on Guernsey due to engine failure at the end of an operational sortie. Improved weather on the 11th again saw the Jagdwaffe out in strength undertaking 'Freiejagd' over the Kent and Sussex coasts and escorting attacks carried out on Portland, Weymouth and Channel convoys. Intensive fighting developed during the early morning and continued throughout the day until deteriorating weather in the afternoon brought most aerial activity to an end. The aircraft lost in the operations of the 11th almost doubled those of the 8th, totalling 14 fighters lost and two damaged. The losses to JG 2 alone almost equalled those incurred on the 8th and included the Gruppe Adjutant of III./JG 2, Obft. Adolf Steidle and the Staffelkapitän of 6./JG 2 Oberf. Edgar Rempel.

With Adler Tag set for the following day, the morning of the 12th dawned bright and clear. This day would witness the first attacks to be carried out against RAF airfields and coastal RDF stations. Set in a series of stages, the attacks moved back and forth along the south coast throughout the day. The airfields of Hawkinge, Lympne and Manston came under heavy attacks and Ventnor RDF station, hit heavily at around midday, was put out of action. Pressure was also maintained in the attacks against coastal shipping and harbours with the convoys 'Arena', 'Agent', 'Snail' and 'Cable' receiving particular attention. Despite the ferocity of the day's fighting, fighter losses were lower than those for the 11th. In all a total of nine Bf 109s failed to return from the day's actions including that downed by the Gruppenkommandeur of III./JG 53, Hptm. Harro Harder. A further five aircraft received various levels of combat damage, one of which, from 1./JG 2, was subsequently written off.

The attacks carried out against the airfields and RDF stations during the 12th were severe and gave a foretaste of what lay ahead. Although the airfields of Hawkinge, Lympne and Manston were serviceable the next day, it was a full three days before Ventnor RDF would function again, leaving a vital breach in the British warning system. Fortunately this loss was disguised from German signals intelligence by having Ventnor signals transmitted by another station until repairs were completed at the site.

June-August 1940



Bf 109E German Army personnel pose for a photograph on an abandoned French M10 at an unidentified location following the Fall of France.



Bf 109E The port side of the Bf 109E of Oberfeldwebel Werner Machold of 7/JG 2 showing his eight victories.

LEFT A group propaganda photograph of Oberfeldwebel Machold pretending to paint his ninth victory on the fuselage of his Bf 109E at Cambrai on 27 May 1940.



MB 152 Uffz Radolf Rothendorfer and Pw Wesser of III/JG 2 take a rest on the wreckage of a Bloch MB 152 at Courson on 10 June 1940.



Bf 109E Flying over the smoke and fire of a British airfield during a dogfight over Dunkirk.



A-101 Taken at the
start of the Battle of Britain.
Left to right: cockpit
view, front view, rear view,
side view, engine, top view.



LEFT Taken on 13 May 1940 this photograph shows Obf Hubertus Pichler von Hofes Staffkapitän of 5/JG 2 standing beside his machine, which is fitted with the standard camouflage of the 70/71 scheme with red patches on its starboard side. Ahead of the windscreen is the white JG 2 Schäfer shield with its script black 'S' while beneath the canopy is the 5 Staffel emblem of the Hans Blockhahn carbon raven character which is black with white eyes and a white-yellow beak.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 of 9./JG 2
Bf 109 E-3 'Yellow 5' of 9./JG 2 as seen at a landing ground near Stenay-le-Petit at the end of the Battle of France. In a high demarcation 70/71 scheme. Although listed as E-3 it retains the earlier style of camo and appears to be carrying its Werknummer on the rudder instead of the more commonly seen location on the fin. This aircraft survived the summer battles only to be lost in an accident on 17 April 1941 while on the strength of 1./JG 2.



JG 2 Richthofen
Geschwader badge



III./JG 53
'Axt von Niederrhein'
emblem



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 Obft. Werner Pichon-Kalau von Hofe, Technical Officer III./JG 53
Obft. Werner Pichon-Kalau von Hofe's Bf 109 E-3 as it appeared during the mid-summer of 1940. Finished in a high demarcation 70/71 camouflage scheme it carried the III.Gruppe 'Axt von Niederrhein' beneath the cockpit ledge.



SHOT DOWN AIRCRAFT Bf 109s of III./JG 53 on an unidentified French airfield in the early summer of 1940. The aircraft in the middle foreground is that of the Flieger Al Obft. Werner Pichon-Kalau von Hofe. The blue 'Axe' emblem on the fuselage of the aircraft in the foreground is that of 8 Staffel, which had been 2/JG 20 before it became a part of JG 53. Both aircraft are finished in the high demarcation 70/71/65 scheme.



B./JG 53
Black Cat
emblem





LEFT Armamenters install an antiaircraft drum in the wing of a Bf 109 E-3. The wing cannon are 20 mm MG 151s.



Effect of Mg^{2+} and Ca^{2+} on the inclusion rate in the presence of Al^{3+} . Mg^{2+} was added above the basic solution containing the Al^{3+} at the 10 mol-% level.



"I could see the entire British island..."

Konrad Jäckel, JG 26

I was born on 12 July 1917 in Lembach, Sachsen. At the age of 12 I became a member of the Hitler Youth in Lembach and flew the *Flieger-Jugend*. Since I had skills from working with my hands, I built models as a hobby. I continued building models for which I was awarded first prize on several occasions. I attended several courses in model and glider construction. I volunteered for the *Luftwaffe* and enlisted for four and a half years, thus avoiding the *Brettfaschung*. I reported to Dresden for my examinations, and six months later, I reported for duty in Silesia. I had no idea I would become a pilot since I assumed that I would be assigned as a mechanic. However, since I apparently had the qualities required to become a pilot, I was assigned to flight training.

In Breslau I qualified for the A flight certificate. Then I received infantry training followed by the flight certificate at Schlesienhain, near Munich. At Neufrappin I received my C flight certificate when I flew the Ju 52, He 111, and other aircraft. Then I was asked as to which branch of the Luftwaffe I wanted to be assigned and I requested fighters. I was assigned to a fighter training school where I met pilots who had fought against Communists in Spain. One of our flight instructors was a lieutenant who had scored seven kills there.

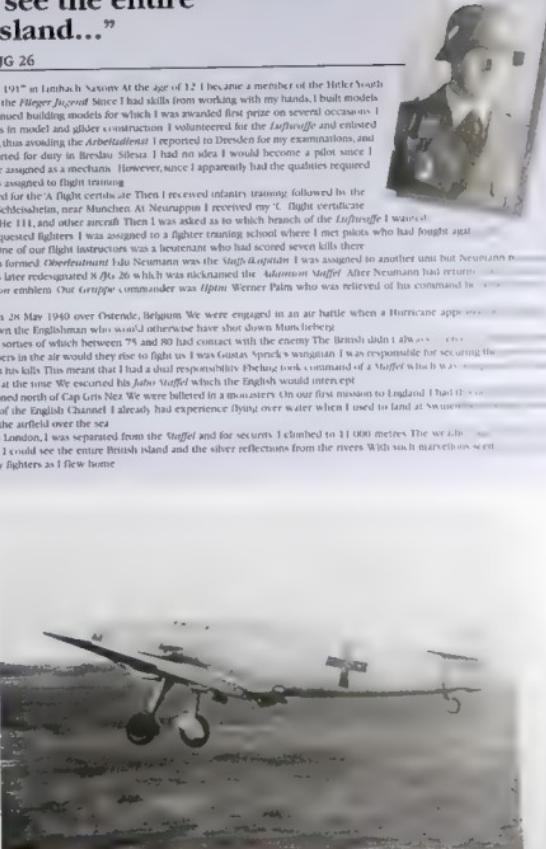
Commentary: When 4.FG 26 was formed, Oberleutnant Edu Neumann was the Staff-Kapitän. I was assigned to another unit but Neumann became my return. The unit was later redesignated 4.FG 26 which was nicknamed the "Adlmann Staffel". After Neumann had returned, I introduced the Adlmann emblem. Our Gruppe commander was Hauptmann Werner Palm who was relieved of his command by fighting spirit.

My first kill was on 28 May 1940 over Ostende, Belgium. We were engaged in an air battle when a Hurricane appeared. Munchenberg, I shot down the Englishman who would otherwise have shot down Muntheberg.

bombs He had 20 kills at the time We escornt his Jatos staffel which the English would intercept

Our unit was stationed north of Cap Gris Nez. We were billeted in a monastery. On our first mission to England, that is, flying over the waters of the English Channel I already had experience flying over water when I used to land at Swindon on the approach flight to the airfield over the sea.

On one mission to London, I was separated from the *Stafford* and for security I climbed to 41,000 feet. Up there were few clouds. I could see the entire British island and the silver reflections from the rivers. With such marvelous seats to watch out for enemy fighters as I flew home.





CW 100 Taken in July 1940, this pilot, thought to be Bf 109E of Hptm. Wdts. Antonius, 3./JG 51, is seen with his Bf 109E having refuelled from 15 gallon drums carried in a truck. Note how the wheel has been pressed into temporary airfield service at a British airfield.

© IWM (Q 5000)



CW 101 Bf 109 E-1 of 4./JG 51 at Bladhean Hill, Kent seen the day after it was brought down. It shows a camouflaged upper surface fuselage and the 4./JG 51 emblem and at left, now raised up on its undercarriage to form a photograph in the background, the members of the R.A.F. recovery team

Emblem of
4./JG 51

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 Lt. Johann Böhm 4./JG 51

This was the first Bf 109 E-1 to come down intact in the British Isles when on 8 July, after being damaged by a Spitfire of 74 Sqn flown by Sgt E.A. Mould, Lt. Böhm was forced to put his crippled aircraft down at Bladhean Hill at Elham in Kent. Although not very clear in photographs, the upper surface camouflage of this aircraft appears to be 70/73 with the fuselage sides carrying a heavily applied mottle believed to be a combination of one of the upper-surface greens and 02. The white number '4' is outlined in red and the 'Weeping Bird' emblem is closer to the Balkenkreuz than usually seen.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 of 1./JG 27

Bf 109 E-3, Werk-Nr. 311 52-106 27, understood to have been based at Plumeret during July 1940. Painted in a high-contrast 02/73 scheme the rudder of the aircraft is a very dark colour suggesting a replacement item which still carries a coat of fabric primer. Just ahead of the aircraft number can be seen a pair of white scissors which is understood to represent a play on the name of Lt.Ulrich Scherer, a 3.Staffel Schwarmfuehrer who was killed in action on 20 July. On the cowling is the JG 27 'Africa' emblem consisting of the heads of a Negress and a Leopard superimposed on a map of Africa. The origins of this emblem can be connected to either Hauptmann Helmut Riegel or Oberstleutnant Karl Framm both of whom had family connections with the former German colonies in Africa.



1./JG 27
Gruppe badge

RJ 100 Flown by Obd. Werner Schäffer Bf 109 E-3 W.Nr. 3125, Werk-Nr. 11. 07. 5.Jg 27, goes airborne from an airfield in Normandy, probably Plumeret sometime during July 1940. The dark rudder is believed to be a replacement with a primer finish (RLM 02). Also visible are the white scissars mentioned behind the cockpit glazing.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of 3./JG 2

Lieutenant Franz Fly's Bf 109 E-4 'Yellow 2' of 3./JG 2 with an upper surface scheme that is believed to have been 02/72, with heavy mottling of 71 on the fuselage sides and tail. Note how the broad white areas of the Balkenkreuz have had their visibility reduced by being overpainted with the fuselage mottling, making the cross appear reminiscent of the earlier style of Balkenkreuz although the thin outer black borders are still faintly visible. Also carried are the JG 2 'Richterhaken' shield beneath the windscreen and on the cowling, the blue and yellow 3.Staffel 'Horrido' pennant which would later be adopted by Helmut Wick as his personal emblem.



3./JG 2 HORRIDO
Staffel emblem

EIN 02/72 Three photos of Bf 109 E-4 of 3./JG 2 'Yellow 1' over France in July 1940 wearing a dark blue to 71 with 72 mottling on the fuselage sides. Close examination of the fuselage cross shows an uncamouflaged appearance and thus black borders have been re-applied on the overpainting of the usually seen white segments of the cross.

LEFT AND OPPOSITE The Bf 109 E-1 W.Nr.62966 of 3/JG 2, Staffel Technical Officer, Hptm. W. Bartels. In late 1940, Northdown Aerodrome became the temporary maintenance base following a raid on the site by 24 Bf 109s after being attacked by a Spitfire. The F suffix to the W.Nr stands for Flakfall (anti-aircraft gun). Flight re-admission using a painted reference mark which had been cleared to receive the new aircraft. The photos clearly show that the new artwork was applied around many of the original stenciled markings. It is unusual to find this number of photos of a short time showing both sides and the varnishes places the machine was put on show before being scrapped.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 W.Nr.62966 ObM.Werner Bartels Technical Officer 3./JG 26
A rebuilt or repaired machine as identified by the 'F' suffix to the W.Nr the aircraft is fitted with the heavier framed canopy and windscreen more usually seen on E-3 and E-4 variants. The upper surface camouflage is understood to have been 02/72 which, like the heavier canopy may well have been applied when the aircraft was repaired.

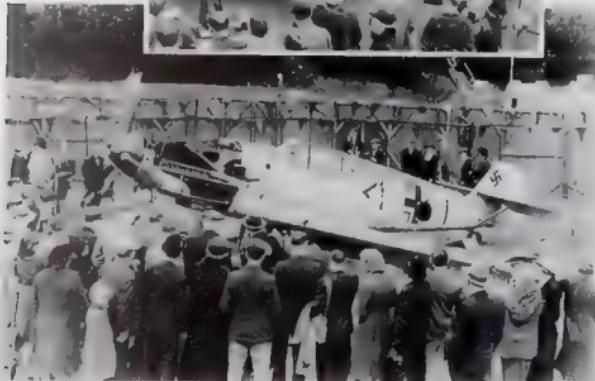




ABOVE A STUCKER DOWN! In these photographs Old Werner Barthal's Stuka has been raised and has an underscarf extended in preparation for removal from the site of its forced landing.



RIGHT AND BELOW
Our famous *Luftwaffe* planes were displayed at various airshows to raise money for war bonds.



ABOVE Another view of Werner Barthal's machine at Croydon; this time being used in a Red Cross publicity photograph. During and after the Battle of Britain many captured Luftwaffe aircraft were exhibited for either propaganda purposes or serve as backdrops in fund-raising events for war bonds in the well-publicised Spitfire Fund.



"I closed to within 20-30 metres and fired with both machine guns and both cannon. The upper gunner really had some nerves..."

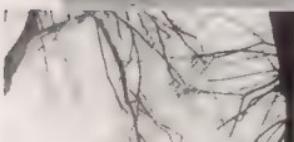
Hans Schmoller-Haldy, JG 54

At the time of the armistice we were near Paris. That evening I was awoken by the effects of the day, and in the morning we would be flying to Eindhoven in the Netherlands. The Staffel took off at 0900 hours and we landed after two hours. We made an intermediate landing to refuel. The Battle of Britain was about to begin.

On 26 June 1940, I was wounded in the leg. I had taken off from Eindhoven and was flying in formation toward German A3. It was reported to be flying over Holland. I was 500 metres above him near Amsterdam. I reported the British aircraft to Schwarm 1 banked and dove and came in immediately behind him just like I had practiced during training. The gunner of the British aircraft rapidly closed to within 20-30 metres and fired at him with both machine guns and both cannon. The upper gunner was very nervous and continued firing at me. As long as I was directly behind him he could not fire through his gun and could only fire a few rounds. He was flying too rapidly and I would have rammed him, so I had to turn away. I could see his tracer and the gunner had a good target when I turned away from my underside. My engine was shut up and I felt a sharp pain in my leg. Fortunately, the aircraft did not burn. I pulled out and continued flying. I was losing blood and I reported on the radio that I was wounded. I landed at Eindhoven and was immediately taken to the hospital. It is amazing that the Blenheims were able to continue flying for another 200-300 kilometres.

I lay in hospital near Eindhoven for two weeks. I returned to flying in August.

I had to fly the first missions over England with my leg wrapped in bandages. During a six-week period, all of the pilots in the Schwarm 1, my deputy and I, were lost. The last sorties were flown by only two or three pilots. The British were now so strong that they could fly across the Channel. We had started the French campaign with 12 pilots but now I had only *U* Kitzinger and *Fir* Knipscher. On our last mission, Knipscher was shot down. Kitzinger and I transferred to Jever. The base commander, an *Oberstleutnant*, greeted me and told me that being in my Staffel *U* Kitzinger was standing in the doorway and I pointed to him and said "This is my Staffel".



ABOVE The Chateau de Colombier used as the headquarters for 1/HG 3

LEFT The Chateau at St. Colombier near Andemont, which was used by Adolf Galland's JG 3 (JG 26)

BETWEEN The Chateau du Desert near Beuvres used as headquarters by Stab III/JG 3



June-August 1940



BELOW AND BEFORE Damaged Bf 109s. White 4 of 1/JG 27 and Yellow 4 of 1/JG 52 stand parked next to a damaged French Morane 315 during the early stages of the battle of Britain



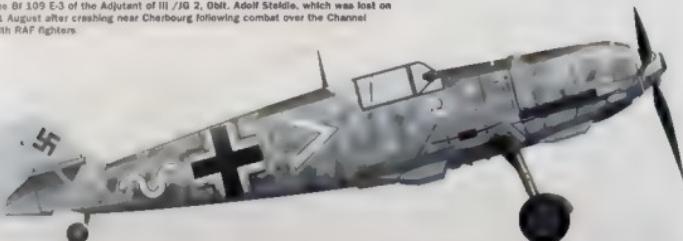


7/JG 2
Staffel emblem.

Bf 109: Taken in France during June July this photograph shows the underside of a Bf 109 E in mid-air, having just passed prior to the application of its tactical emblem. In the background, Obi. Leutnant Koenig and Lt. Hirschbauer the Staffelkapitän of III./JG 2, can be seen flying in formation. Note the camouflage scheme of the aircraft, which appears to be a mix of the standard Luftwaffe scheme and the ground attack scheme. A Bf 109 F is also visible in the background, bearing the single red circle insignia. Below it is the characteristic red cross insignia of II Gruppe. Obi. Adolf Steidle lost his life during the course of the campaign on 11 August.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 of Obi. Adolf Steidle Adjutant of III./JG 2
The Bf 109 E-3 of the Adjutant of III./JG 2, Obi. Adolf Steidle, which was lost on 11 August after crashing near Cherbourg following combat over the Channel with RAF fighters.



"We came face to face and shot at each other simultaneously..."

GERHARD SCHÖPFEL, JG 26

I was appointed Staffelkapitän of 9./JG 26 on 25 September 1939. We spent a month training I.D. V. in winter of 1939-40, our Gruppe's only Abzeichen being claimed on 7 November by my friend Joachim Münchberg from the Gruppenstab III./JG 26.

During the campaign against the West, I chalked up four victories. In fact my first aerial combat impressed itself on me more than my first actual victory! I remember I encountered a Belgian Hurricane in the Beauvais area. We came face to face and shot at each other simultaneously. What is apparent in such an encounter is that you do not know in which direction your opponent will go and at *once*, if you each have the same intention you could collide. I do not know if I hit him but, in any case, he got me several times in the wings. Fortunately, nothing vital in my aircraft was destroyed.

So, the western campaign ended for me without too much damage and we prepared for the next step. If you ask the question, *did we fear fight before action?* - I would like to tell you the following short story. I was young, I was a pathfinder. With my gang, we often went to play in ruins. I suffered from vertigo and remained on the g when my comrades were playing high on the walls. Was it to defeat this fear that I chose to join the Luftwaffe? Probably! When worty to enlist, I was very anxious and I really wondered if I had chosen the right arm of service. But when I was in action, all my fear disappeared.

I had the same feeling during my entire career as a fighter pilot. Between the end of the campaign in France and the beginning of the Battle of Britain, I was a dogfighting pilot. Between the end of the campaign in France and the beginning of the Battle of Britain, I was a dogfighting pilot. Between the end of the campaign in France and the beginning of the Battle of Britain, I was a dogfighting pilot. Between the end of the campaign in France and the beginning of the Battle of Britain, I was a dogfighting pilot.

One of my first victories of the Battle of Britain is a good example of this *fear-on-fear* factor. I had a dogfight at very high altitude. I succeeded in firing at him. The pilot lost control of his aircraft which continued to fly horizontally, then crashing. We were already in France. I overflow the crash site and when I decided to fly away and return to my base, became troublesome and I had to land immediately. Fortunately I found a large field and both landed well. The problem, I was a German *Luftwaffe* hospital. A doctor arrived quickly at my landing site and took my heart beat. When he said I was in ashenheit and said: "You just had a dogfight, you've made a body-slapping yet your heart beats as if you were ... a book - amazing!"

BELOW AND RIGHT: Hauptmann Alexander von Wittenbergh, Staffelkapitän of 11./JG 26, cockpit of his Bf 109 E. Yellow 4. Hauptmann Alexander von Wittenbergh, a pilot of the First World War, was called back to the Reich at the beginning of April 1940, asked to take command of Bf 109 E-3, the adjutant commanding Hauptmann von Hörnigk. During their brief liaison von Wittenbergh's place was taken over by Oberleutnant Hermann Metz.



August 1940



BETWEEN Bf 109 E-1 Black 12 of 1/JG 27 as pictured here shortly after taking off from its dispersal area, the sun rises at 1910, showing to good advantage the spiraling swing of the tailplane as it retracts. Note also that the flaps are intermediate position; it were possible to assist in closing off.

BELOW A Bf 109 E-1 of 1/JG 2 undergoing maintenance at Frickey West August 14, 1940. Note the four wings of the nose - the red pronged 'R' emblem was taken from the fair-weather arms of the unit's Kapitan, Hauptmann Alexander von Staemmler.



B./JG 2
"Wolfhound" emblem



LEFT A Bf 109 E-1 believed to be White 1 of 1/JG 2 undergoes pre-flight maintenance on a camouflaged dispersal bay probably at Frickey during early August.



Phase One • 35

August 1940



ABOVE The Kommodore of JG 2, Harry von Bülow-Pöhl, stands next to his Bf 109 E-1, which has the white 'R' emblem on the nose. The aircraft is seen at Frickey on July 1, 1940.

LEFT A close-up of the R emblem containing the script 'R' on the nose. The shield was white with a black border and the 'R' was red.

BETWEEN A Bf 109 E-1 possibly of 3/JG 2 seen in Saint Quentin on 27th July 1940.





LEFT: A Bf 109 F belonging to the Gruppenkommandant of JG 2 seen on the Channel front in July 1940. Note the aircraft carries the chevron of the Gruppenkommandant which appears to be in the uncommon colour of yellow.



RIGHT AND BELOW: Oberstleutnant Werner Mölders, Kommandeur of 21. Jagdgeschwader, during the French campaign. He was shot down and captured on 17 June 1940, and died in British custody on 19 July 1940. Note the Staffel R. Radl (Röder) insignia on the glider's fuselage.



"We fought for Fatherland, not the Führer..."

WALTER STENGEL, JG 51

I was born on 5 July 1907 near Kehl am Rhein and I started flying gliders in 1929. Then in 1934, I started receiving free training on powered alecraft and I received my pilot's certificate. From 1936, I flew as a reservist in the *Lufthansa*. In the autumn of 1938, I was commissioned as *Fernwacht* [air force liaison] and this is why I continued on from pilot to the *Lufthansa*. During the Weimar period, I had been unemployed but I was very interested in sport flying. The National Socialist Party had no involvement in activity during that time. When war came, we fought for Fatherland not the *Führer*.

I was called to active service on the night of 25–26 August 1939. I went to Karlsruhe where our group met at the railway station and from there to Augsburg. A written order came in from *Luftruppenkommando Mitteldeutschland* to my Staffel at Fürstenwalde. I had flown the He 70, *Büffel*, but not the Bf 109. I had only a B1 certificate. I was supposed to report to an Army reconnaissance unit. I spoke with Dr Buttmann whom I knew and who got me a transfer to a fighter even though I had no fighter training.

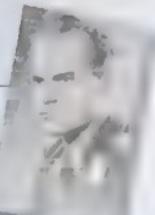
In November 1939, Bf 109 G-1 was formed at Köttingen. I was assigned to this unit as a fighter pilot without any fighter gear. I was afraid that I would not see any combat before the war was concluded. My *Kommandeur* was Major Krämer. He was followed by Bürgler. We were stationed at Freiburg-Hüfingen on Lake Constance during the winter of 1939–40. The edge of the lake was killed off 2 February 1940 when he crashed landed on the ice and slid into the water below. Horst Günther Matthes took over the unit.

We had strict orders not to cross the French border so as not to provoke the French in any way. There were a few alerts and we to intercept French reconnaissance aircraft but we were too far away from the Rhine and we could not pursue them into France. We were the *Kapitän* of the 6. Staffel.

My first air battle was during the French campaign over Dunkirk when the British Army was evacuating. Our 8. Staffel Hurricane squadron which seemed to consist of beginners. They didn't fly a defensive circle like our other opponents. This was the first time that I had fired the gun on my Bf 109. I pressed shot down two. I did not score any kills during this campaign. We suffered a lot of friendly fire every other day.

After the Battle of France, Oberstleutnant Werner Mölders took over the *Grenadier* from Oberst Theo Oberkampf. I flew with him when he took command. I was wearing my flight suit which had been holed during a low-level attack at Châlons several days before when my aircraft had received a hit. Since I did not have a replacement for the ceremony, Mölders had authorized me to wear it.

I flew a total of 505 sorties of which 115 were during the Battle of Britain. I was just the fourth pilot to receive an auxiliary fuel tank carrier. We flew mostly escort missions during the Battle. My most memorable mission was on 29 July as escort for a Ju 87 formation which attacked a convoy of 22 ships. We had to admire the courage of the Stuka pilots since they flew such a slow aircraft. Our unit sustained most losses when we escorted Stukas. During the first attack on the convoy, the Stukas scored eight direct hits, destroying these targets. A second attack managed another nine hits. Of the 22 ships, only four came through unscathed. We had our first fatalities on this mission when 1st Unteroffizier who landed his Bf 109 in the *Kanal* off Calais was later found dead.





Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 of Stab/JG 2
The Bf 109 E-3 of Major Harry von Below-Bolkamp the Geschwaderkommodore of JG 2, illustrates an example of the heavily stippled mottle applied to the blue 65 sides of JG 2 aircraft during the summer of 1940.

Major Harry von Below-Bolkamp is helped with his life vest
by a member of the ground crew.





Pilots take an afternoon meal whilst a JG 109 I.A of 9.JG 2 takes across the airfield near La Havre soon after the unit arrived from Germany.

**"Mölders called me and just said:
'Let's shoot them down!'"**

FRIEDRICH KIRCHHES, JG 51

Following a short rest after the Western Campaign, JG 51 was posted to the Channel to take on the RAF. I was still *Geschwaderadjunkt* which meant I flew as wingman to the *Kommodore*. On 20 July 1940, before the start of the so called Battle of Britain, our old *Kommodore* Oberst Theo Osterkamp received orders to leave the *Geschwader* in the hands of Werner Mölders. At that time, being 38 years of age, Osterkamp was the oldest *Kommodore* to serve in a fighter *Geschwader*. Newly promoted to *Major*, Mölders had been shot down in France with JG 53 and taken prisoner before being released on 30 June. Of course, he was already very well-known and I felt it would be an honor if I kept me as his *Adjunkt* and *Ritterflieger*. He took over the *Geschwader* about one week later and kept me at his side.

The first operational mission flying in the head of the *Geschwader* was on Sunday 28 July and nearly ended in catastrophe. We flew towards England. The mission meant we had to fly under orders to return to France if we were unable to get away from the rest of the unit, perhaps so that he could observe things from a better position. Mölders and I thus found ourselves alone at 78,000 metres. We knew that our situation was dangerous, so we could be attacked by Spitfires, but even worse was the fact that it could get out that a *Kommodore* had flown over England alone with his wingman. Göring had personally written an order to forbid such a situation; he wanted to preserve his *Kommodore*. When we decided to turn back, we spotted three Spitfires flying at 2,000 metres below us. Mölders called me and just said: "Let's shoot them down!" They had not seen us coming out of the sun and our higher position gave us a good advantage. Mölders approached the enemy at an angle and took up a good position. At that moment, having the task of watching our backs, I spotted more aircraft and warned him: "It's being!" A Staffel above us and another one in our back!" Mölders answered: "Be quiet! They're ours!" I trusted him from afar, aircraft are only small dots and are very difficult to identify. The Spitfires quickly approached us. Now, we saw with horror, that they were not friends. Coming in from a higher position, they opened fire. We maintained direction, approaching the three Spitfires which had not seemed to notice us.

Mölders started shooting and a Spitfire went down. Suddenly, we were surrounded by bullets and were forced to fly away. We dived away in opposite directions. I very quickly dropped down by 4,000 metres leaving my *Kommodore*. I had to make some sharp maneuvers and I finally succeeded escaping the British. I landed safely and discovered that my engine had been hit twice.

But I was very anxious to know what had happened to my *Kommodore*. As soon as I was on my legs, I was told that Mölders had already landed, but that he was wounded. His aircraft had been hit several times and he had taken a hit in his left knee. At that very moment, he was on his way to hospital.

Göring had already been informed of his fate. That same day, I was ordered to call him personally. I did it with considerable anxiety and I received the biggest bowing out of my whole life. Fortunately Mölders was not long in coming back. We all remembered for a long time after that, his first *Abschuss* with JG 51.



RIGHT: Luftwaffe units often went to great lengths to ensure that their aircraft were concealed from the air

BETWEEN: View showing a typical camouflaged fighter dispersal area in France in the summer of 1940



BELOW: In 1941, a *C.31* that would have been in the picture





RIGHT AND BELOW
Bf 109s shot down
over England from
Ceuta and coastal
frontier patrols.
Messerschmitt Bf
109s of Jagdgeschwader
27, 1st August 1940.
The last Spitfire
to be shot down
over England was
this Bf 109G-2
from 1st Gruppe,
JG 27, which
crashed near
Dover on 24 August.



Bf 109 After having recovered from wounds Major Erich Mierendorff command of a Gruppe Bf 109s (1./JG 27) in front of him left came north and released to French authorities. This one 2nd July he escaped to France West there the Gruppe stayed until 1 August. Mierendorff Gruppe commanding of JG 27 until 24 September 1940.

Bf 109 The Bf 109E-4 of Hauptmann Hans-Joachim Marseille (1st Lt G-51) buried in the ground after combat over the Channel (now held by Poland) September 1940. Hauptmann Marseille, who was killed in a crash, was one of the deadliest fighter pilots on the Channel front.



Bf 109 Pilot Officer John C. T. H. 27, 1000 hours
breaks the rule of economy by downing
one of his own. June 1940. (Continued on page 44)

August 1940



LEFT AND ABOVE: Staffel Rg 41 suffered its heaviest losses during the Battle of Britain when Oberleutnant Wolfgang Wenzel was shot down and killed north of Andilly, France, on 21 July 1940. He was killed despite making an attempt to bail out of his stricken aircraft which crashed here, just to the left of the airfield along the coast.



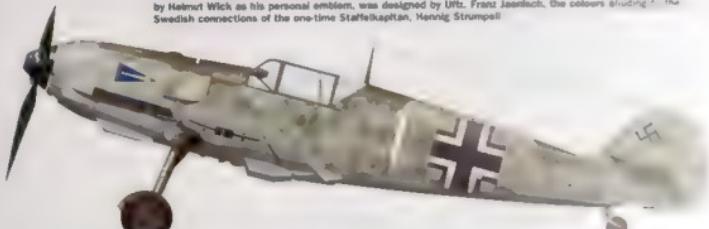
CENTER: A Bf 109E-4 of 3./JG 2, seen here at a Luftwaffe airfield in France, was shot down by a Hurricane of No. 601 Squadron, RAF, on 21 July 1940. The pilot, Leutnant Helmut Wick, was captured. The aircraft had been flying from Andilly, France, when it was hit by fire from the British fighter. The aircraft was destroyed and the pilot was taken prisoner. The aircraft was destroyed and the pilot was taken prisoner.



HORRIDO emblem of 3./JG 2

MESSERSCHMITT BF 109 E-4 OF 3./JG 2

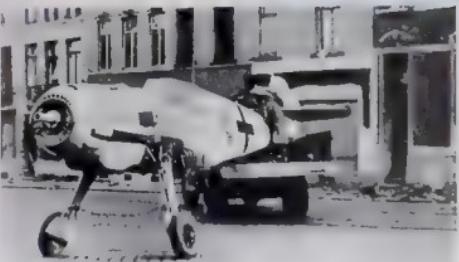
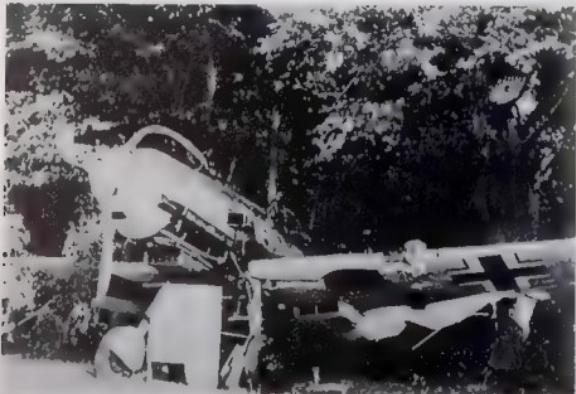
This unidentified Bf 109 E-4 of 3./JG 2 exhibits two variations from finishes seen on other aircraft of the unit. Finished in an O2/T1 scheme with heavy fuselage bands of the same colours, it carries nose art 2 shield beneath the windscreen and the width of the black borders of the Balkenkreuz have been increased to reduce the visibility of the white segments. The yellow and blue 'Horrido' pennant on the nose cowl signified the Swedish connections of the one-time Staffelkapitän, Henning Strumpell.



Red Cat
badge 4./JG 52



THIS PAGE: On 5 August 1940 Hauptmann Douglas Prox m. Maßfeldkapitän of 1/JG 51 collided with his wingman's future Unterleutnant Obitz Lewin Platz on the airfield at Pölitz. Lewin Platz suffered serious but non-fatal injuries. Prox returned to flying in October of that year but doctors pronounced that his operational flying days were over. His place was taken by future Jagdflieger Obitz Hermann Freiherr Joppenrodt. Note the Staffel Mackay Mouse on them beneath the cockpit on White R.



LEFT: A Hawker Hurricane fighter plane parked on a tarmac in front of a building with a sign that reads 'JUNIOR KEGEL'. Note the 'K' on the nose which has been defaced with paint during the war.



ABOVE: German technicians pose for a photograph with a pilot's photograph of 109 (1) of 2/JG 54 as a backdrop probably at Braine in early September 1940. Part of the Staffel emblem is just visible below the cockpit.

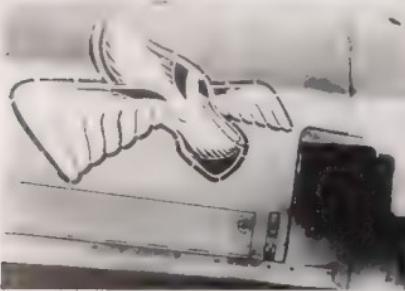


LEFT: Bf 109 E Yellow 13 of 4.JG 54 in France during August 1940. Note that unlike other aircraft in the staffel this machine does not carry the unit's emblem on the side fusible.

116.27 At 0944.5, Black 2 - probably aircraft belonging to 131.11.2 and seen at 0845. Taken at home ground (which coincided with another shot from the air) probably from 8 Staff.



116.28 At 0945, another was seen at 0845. A 500 lb. incendiary bomb exploded under the fuselage, killing one. At 0945, the survivor of 131.11.2, flying a white Spitfire, managed to land.



116.29 At the end of the Western campaign 1.36.52 was refitted at Neuville-en-Normandie before moving, Calais on 6 August. Although taken at Calais, the exact date of this photograph is unknown and shows Lt Hans Berndt of 1.36.52 being welcomed back from mission by 131.11.2. Berndt, besides Erhard, would later become a prisoner of war being captured after bailing out of his crippled Bf 109E on 15 September.



116.30 Reportedly taken at Caen during August, this view shows White 4 and other aircraft of 2./11. At various camouflage launchers dispersed beneath the trees on the perimeter of the airfield.



116.31 The date and location of this photograph are uncertain but it shows wreckage of the large single engine carried by some aircraft of 1.36.52. The engine is blue with white details.



116.32 Black 2
early Aug
calm
Bf 109
131.11.2

Werner Mölders

Youth

Werner Mölders was born at Geisenheuren/Westfalia on 18 March 1915. At the time of Werner's birth his father Victor was working as a teacher in England but with the outbreak of war in August 1914 he was forced to escape home to Germany aboard a neutral Dutch ship. On returning home, he joined the German Army and was subsequently commissioned as a *Lieutenant* only to be killed while serving with *Infanterie Regiment 145* near Vauquois on the Argonne Front on 2 March 1915 shortly before Werner's second birthday. Following the death of her husband, his mother, Anna Maria, returned to her family in Bebenhausen/Lavel and faced with the difficult task of raising four children (Hans, Anne-Marie Werner and Victor) on her own. The Mölders family were devout Catholics but lived in a very strong Protestant environment. Since religion can often offer a form of lonely sanctuary Werner developed into a very serious boy and would retain a seriousness all his life.



Service in the Army

Deciding to follow in his father's footsteps Werner wanted to become an army officer. Obtaining his *Abitur* at the age of 17, he enlisted in the small army allowed to Germany by the provisions of the 1919 Versailles Treaty. On 1 April 1931 he joined II/JR 2 at Allenstein in East Prussia. In October 1932, he was transferred to the *Kriegsschule* at Dresden and to the *Pionierschule* at München in June 1932. With aviation becoming the great dream of many young Germans who remembered the First World War exploits of Böckle and von Richthofen, the rise to power of the National Socialist Party in 1933 and the creation of a new air force gave Werner the opportunity to transfer to that arm of the services. But, as with his future contemporary Adolf Galland, Mölders would also suffer problems. Whereas Galland's eyes were deficient, Mölders suffered from a fear of heights, a fear that he would conquer with a major effort of willpower.

Service in the Luftwaffe

On 6 February 1934 Mölders joined the DVS (*Deutsche Verkehrsfliegerschule*) at Corbas and remained there until the end of that year. Following his promotion to *Leutnant* on 1 March 1934, he trained with *Kampffliegerschule Tutow* and *Jagdfliegerschule Schleissheim* until the middle of 1935. On 1 July 1935, he was transferred to *Fliegergruppe Schwarm*, a ground support unit which was later redesignated I/JG 162 *Innemann*. Flying He 111s and He 40s, he was transferred to fighters the following year. Promoted to *Oberleutnant* on 1 April 1936, he led the *Jagdstaffel* of II/JG 334 *Hornet Wiesel* at Wiesbaden where his commanding officer was *Major* Theodor Osterkamp, a veteran of the First World War credited with 52 aerial victories. On 15 March 1937 Mölders took command of 1. Staffel of I/JG 334 at Wiesbaden and his unit, equipped with the Henkel He 51, would be successively redesignated I/JG 133, and then I/JG 54 *Pib 44*.



Werner Mölders as a young *Fliegeroberleutnant* flying in a biplane

The Spanish Civil War
The seriously-minded Mölders was still a bachelor when he was sent to Spain in May 1938. On the 24th of that month, he succeeded Adolf Galland as *Kapitän* of 3/JG 33. This was the first time that the paths of the two men crossed. At the same time, the obsolete He 51s were replaced by the new Bf 109 *Dorni* which would later be replaced by the *Erlöf* becoming the best fighter used by either side during the Spanish Civil War. Combining his own abilities with the qualities of the Messerschmitt fighter, Mölders quickly achieved success and in his first aerial engagement, shot down an L15. Four days later, two further victories were added; another L15 and an L16. With the exception of an SB-2 shot down on 23 August 1938, Mölders would claim only Polikarpov fighters until the end of his stay in Spain. On his return to Germany on 5 December 1938, he was credited

with 14 victories plus an additional three that were unconfirmed. Promoted to *Hauptmann* in the highest scoring German ace of the Spanish Civil War, he was then temporarily assigned (as had been Galland earlier) to the Air Ministry to study and improve fighter tactics. Issues gained during the Spanish conflict. His influence was to be enormous in that he proposed the deployment of a loose formation of four aircraft - the 'Schwarm' - broken up into two elements of two - the 'Rote'.

The 'Sitzkrieg'

While Galland was transferred to II/JG 133, Mölders returned to his old fighter unit to lead I/JG 53 (formerly I/JG 133). It was during this time that he acquired his nickname of 'Vati' ('Papa') due to his serious nature, experience and rigidity. This nickname was not intended as offensive but one which was born out of respect. No one feared Mölders and he was very popular amongst his pilots. He was not an impulsive man and could drink a glass of beer like the rest, but never twice!

If his successes in Spain were partly due to his good fortune in receiving the best aircraft at the time, then the 'Sitzkrieg' - or Phoney War - was to prove that he was an excellent fighter pilot tactician. His introduction to the new campaign was, nevertheless, quite unsettling. On 8 September 1939, he led three other IM 10s in an attack on six French *Gloster Gladiator*s north of Karlsruhe. In the ensuing dogfight, Mölders' Bf 109 was heavily damaged, forcing him to crash land in a field near Wolfersweiler. Trapped in his cockpit and slightly wounded, he had to wait for a *Vierer* *Flak* crew to release him. Strangely, the French pilots involved claimed two victories, attributed to three pilots (Sgt. Crucianich being credited with two claims combined with two other pilots).

Mölders recovered quickly and claimed his first victory over the border twelve days later. Taking off with his *Schwarm* to Trier, he destroyed another IM 10 of GC 1/5 from a patrol escorting a reconnaissance aircraft. Sgt. Queguiner, piloting N°21, was able to bail out of his aircraft and crashed near Metz.

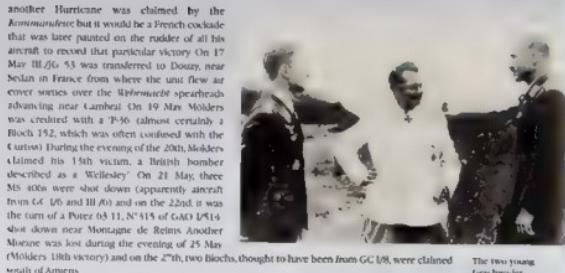
After being promoted *Kommandeur* of III/JG 53, Mölders celebrated his new command by shooting down a *Blenheim* I (L6694) of 100 Sqn engaged in reconnaissance along the Moselle on 30 October 1939. He would have to wait until 22 December to obtain his third victory. France. While escorting a Do 17 P 1 of IV/JG 2 he attacked some fighters identified as Morane but which were in fact, Hurricane Is of No. 73 Sqn RAF. With his wingman *Oberleutnant* Hahn he shot down two (L1967 and N2385) near Badische. With the onset of bad weather the first months of 1940 were quiet but on 2 March, at the end of a very scrappy encounter (Sgt. Mölders and *Oberleutnant* Neuhold were also to claim two Hurricanes L1808 and L1948) from No. 73 Sqn which crashed near Metz. The following day again around Metz, Mölders engaged a Morane Saulnier 40N of 68 F/L 3. This was claimed destroyed but, in fact, C/Lt. Koerber although wounded, managed to land his damaged aircraft at Toul airfield. On 26 March, another M5 400 was claimed near Trier but this proved to be a Hurricane of No. 73 Sqn whose pilot, F/O Edgar James Collier Rain of the RNZAF baled out after having previously been shot down on 2 March! On 2 April another Hurricane, this time from No. 1 Sqn, was shot down near St Avold but the pilot was able to force-land his heavily damaged fighter helping the Allied lines and avoid capture.

On 20 April, III/JG 53 were flying in the Zweibrücken area where they encountered Curtiss H-16s of GC 1/4 escorting a Potez 63.111 reconnaissance aircraft of GR 1/16. In the combat that ensued, anti-aircraft gunners hit both sides! An H-16 N°136 fell to Mölders while another was damaged by Flak. The pilot, C/Lt. Crucianich, was seriously wounded but managed to crash-land his fighter near Biesbach. On 23 April, Mölders claimed his last victory of the 'Sitzkrieg' when he shot down a Hurricane I (N2391) of No. 73 Sqn during the morning near Siervelds-Rathen. The pilot, Sgt. C. Campbell parachuting to safety. During this campaign Hptm. Mölders was credited with nine additional victories while Adolf Galland flew only ground support. By the time Galland did transfer to the fighter arm Werner Mölders had 24 official victories.

The Campaign in the West

On 10 May 1940, III/JG 53 was based at Wiesbaden airfield and Mölders had to wait four days before he was credited with his first victory during the invasion of the West, this being a Hurricane on the 14th of the month. During the first days of the attack and main over France III/JG 53 had to escort the bombers and were ordered not to attack enemy fighters. On 15 May





another Hurricane was claimed by the Kommandeur but it would be a French cockade that was later painted on the rudder of all his aircraft to record that particular victory. On 17 May JG 53 was transferred to Douai, near Sedan in France from where the unit flew air cover sorties over the Wehrmacht spearheads advancing near Cambrai. On 19 May Mölders was credited with a P-36 (almost certainly a Bloch 152, which was often confused with the Curtiss) During the evening of the 20th, Mölders claimed his 15th victim, a British bomber described as a 'Wellington'. On 21 May, three Me 109s were shot down (apparently aircraft from Gf 16 and III 60) and on the 22nd, it was the turn of a Potez 63.11, N°515 of GAO U/14 shot down near Montagne de Reims. Another Morane was lost during the evening of 25 May (Mölders 18th victory) and on the 27th, two Blaubs, thought to have been from GC 1/8, were claimed.

With 20 victories over France and 14 in Spain, Mölders was awarded the Ritterkreuz which was presented to him on Loe airfield near Le Selve. On 31 May, near Abbeville, Mölders shot down a LeO 451 of GB 1/12. On 3 June, during Operation *Pauca* (launched primarily as a propaganda operation), Mölders claimed two victories - a Curtiss H-75 (which, in fact, was a Bloch 152 and which was subsequently identified on his rudder with a British roundel) and, very unusually, a Spitfire. Exactly what a Spitfire was doing near Paris at a time when all RAF units had retreated to their bases in England to fight over Dunkirk is unclear. The Spitfire was probably a D 520 of GC 1/5. Two days later, Mölders experienced altogether different circumstances. At around noon, he was credited with the destruction of a Bloch 152 (N°651 of GC 1/80) and a Potez 63.11 (N°250 of GAO 5017) and later that afternoon, while on his second mission of the day, he spotted some Moranes attacking some Bf 109s. He decided to intervene but the 'MS 406's' turned out to be potent D 520s of GC 1/7. Having under-estimated the enemy type, Mölders was shot down by S/L R. E. Pommier Layrargues; his Bf 109 E-3 crashing near Candy. Mölders was able to parachute to safety, but was captured on the ground by soldiers of 195c RALI, an artillery unit who set upon him before an officer intervened. Interested in the man who shot him down, Mölders asked to meet him, only to find that Pommier Layrargues was already dead, having been brought down and killed at Marœuil a few minutes after their engagement.

Mölders ended the *Westfeldzug* in a French POW camp at Montferrand. With the fall of France, he was eventually freed at the end of June 1940 and this is where there is cause for some interesting speculation! If he had been captured by the British in May, he would almost certainly have been sent to a POW camp in Canada, ending the war in safety and terminating the career of a great pilot but as a prisoner of the French, he was liberated and became - posthumously - a flying legend. Which was the better fate?



This Bf 109 F-4 was presented to Mölders by the people of the Saar region. The inscription on the nose reads: *Saarbergmann Glück auf! Welch Dank Ihnen der Vaterland*

The Battle of Britain

After a short period of leave, Mölders promoted to Major on 19 July, returned to III/JG 51. Soon afterwards, however he left to take over command of JG 51 at that time Adolf Galland was appointed to lead III/JG 26 after having shot down 14 planes in the *Westfeldzug* whilst with JG 27.

As is often the case, establishing a new command proved hectic for Mölders. On 28 July the new Kommodore damaged a Spitfire I (P9429) of No 41 Sqn, RAF. Wounded in the thigh, the pilot, F/O A. D. Lovell, managed to land his damaged aircraft at Hornchurch. F/O Lovell survived to become an ace in his own right, only to be killed in a flying accident in 1945. Shortly afterwards, Mölders himself was shot down by F/Lt John Webster of the same Sqn. This was Webster's fifth claim but he was killed on 5 September 1940 when his parachute failed to open after baling out following a collision with another Spitfire of 41 Sqn. Author's note: another source attributes this claim to the ace, 'Sailor' Malan of 4 Sqn - see page 17). Wounded in the knee, Mölders was able to force-land his damaged Bf 109 on the French coast. He returned to his unit on 7 August but would have to wait some time before he could fly again.

On 26 August 1940, Mölders submitted his 27th claim, another Spitfire. By 20 September his score had reached 40 enemy aircraft shot down, proof that the battles over England were very intense and on that day he was credited with two more Spitfires (X3417 and X3215) of No 92 Sqn and was awarded the Oak Leaves to his Ritterkreuz. He was only the second member of the German armed forces to receive this decoration. Four days later Adolf Galland also received the award becoming the third person to do so. It was at about this time that German newspapers devised a kind of competition between the two aces. One publication was to be for Mölders another "for Galland" in reality however Mölders was more interested in such "competition". He told Galland: "In this war you will be the *Richtschlag* and I the *Blöde*" - yet further proof that the German Kommodore was more interested in tactics than glories!

Mölders' score continued to increase on 27 September it was a Spitfire over Kent, possibly P9364 of No. 222 Sqn piloted by Sqn Ernest Scott, who was killed after having shot down a Bf 109 - his fifth confirmed victory. On 1 October, another Spitfire I went down (X462 of No 66 Sqn, also destroyed) three Hurricanes (P4996, V2251 and V226) of No. 145 Sqn. On 11 October Mölders claimed another Spitfire (R6800 L2-N of No 66 Sqn). On 12 October three more Hurricanes on 22 October (possibly from Nos 66 and 252 Sqn's) off the English coast. Mölders now had his fifth victory (Galland reached the total eight days later). From the beginning of October, Mölders became the first pilot to test the new Bf 109 F in combat which soon proved superior to contemporary British fighters. Certainly, this also helped in his subsequent success.

After spending a few days leave skiing, JG 51's Kommodore returned to action at the beginning of 1941. Exploiting the relative inactivity of the Luftwaffe in the west (the German High Command was preparing to attack the Soviet Union and had moved many units to the east), the RAF were beginning to conduct sorties over France and the fighting now took place mainly off the French coast. On 20 February Mölders claimed two Spitfires (his 57th and 58th victories). Five days later, a Spitfire IX (X392 of No 611 Sqn) was shot down and on the following day he scored his 60th victory. Galland had to wait until 15 April to attain the same score.

On 13 March Mölders shot down another British ace, Sqn Aces Donald MacDonnell MacDonnell, from No 64 Sqn, was born in Baku in 1913, and was the 22nd Hereditary Chief of the Orléans. Leading a sweep over Northern France, MacDonnell (credited with nine or ten victories) was shot down by Mölders (his 62nd victory) and baled out into the Channel. He was rescued by a German motor boat but remained a prisoner of war until 1945.



Sitting in the cockpit of his Bf 109 F Werner Mölders is seen here describing another victory.



The new versions of the Hurricane and Spitfire proved no match for the Bf 109 F. This is well indicated by a list of Mölders's claims for the period:

- 15 April Hurricane II of No.615 Sqn
- 16 April two Hurricane IIs of No.601 Sqn (one claimed as a "Spitfire")
- 4 May Hurricane II (Z/204) of No.601 Sqn
- 6 May Hurricane II (Z/214) of No.601 Sqn
- 8 May Spitfire II of No.92 Sqn

Mölders aerial victories declined following the transfer of JG 51 to the East. On 21 June, Adolf Galland - then with 69 claims - was the first *Luftwaffe* pilot to add the Swords to his *Ritterkreuz*. On the eve of *Barbarossa* - the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Mölders had only 60 claims, but on the day of the invasion, he claimed an L153 (which must have brought back memories of Spain!) and three SB-2s shot down. He was awarded the Swords but this time as the second pilot to receive the decoration.

At this time Soviet aircraft and pilots were seen as generally inferior to their German counterparts and this enabled Mölders and his men to claim unprecedented scores and on 30 June he was credited with the destruction of no fewer than five enemy aircraft. By 15 July 1941, on his 29th combat mission he claimed his 100th and 101st victories and was awarded the Diamonds to his *Ritterkreuz*. By comparison Galland would have to wait until 28 January 1942 for this decoration.

By this time, Mölders had achieved an almost mythical status, seen to be deserving of protection. He was ordered not to fly (*Hagervorbot*) to avoid risking his life at the front and was transferred to the Air Ministry in Berlin. On 7 August 1941, he was promoted to Inspector of Fighters and left his unit and on 13 September 1941, he married Louise Baldau, the widow of a fallen comrade.

Mölders could have remained safely at the Ministry, close to his wife, but he was preoccupied with the Soviet campaign and visited the Eastern Front many times. In the autumn of 1941, he went to the Crimea to lead the combined operations of *Stabos* and fighters where he discovered an important supply problem which he tried to resolve. In spite of the *Hagervorbot*, he wanted to have a clearer picture of the situation in the air by flying again. On 8 and 11 November Mölders borrowed a Bf 109 of III/JG 77 and shot down three more Soviet aircraft over Sevastopol and the Kertsch peninsula though he did not record them officially. Future *Ritterkreuzträger* Herbert Holzke remembered serving as Mölders' wingman at this time. After spotting enemy aircraft, the Inspector led his *Kampfzirkel* giving them instructions by radio and documenting his victories. It would seem that *Vater Mölders* envied the role of controller and adviser.

On 17 November 1941 Generaloberst Ernst Udet committed suicide and Mölders was called back to Berlin to



The maker of Mölders in his top F-4cane modelled starboard wing tip in his legend depicting St. Michael bars indicate that this photo was taken during early 1940.



assist with the funeral. Four days later he began his journey to the capital as a passenger in a He 111 of III/KG 27 piloted by Oberleutnant another former flyer from Spain. The weather was bad and following an interim stop at Lemberg, the Heinkel took off again but the weather conditions continued to deteriorate. Near Freistadt, the port engine failed and the crew tried to land at the nearest available airfield, Schmidmühle. At low altitude, the second engine cut and the He 111 16+TH hit the ground near Martin Quander Farm at N°152 Flughafenstrasse. Mölders was killed at 11.30 on 22 November. He was succeeded as Inspector of Fighters by Adolf Galland.

As is often the case after a plane crash (Balbo, Bokorski, Taiti etc.) rumours circulated in some quarters about a plot to kill Mölders but post-war research has found these to be totally without foundation. It is true that Mölders, a Catholic, criticised the Nazi Party many times for its activities against the church. Germany's greatest ace for such beliefs at such a critical period in the war, inconceivable.

Werner Mölders was buried in the *Inselidenfriedhof* at Berlin where Mölders' son already has his *Geschwader* JG 51 later adopted the honour name *Frederick the Great*.

As a postscript to this biography it is worth quoting the words of another ace, "Wir waren mir Jagdflieger Mölders nicht mehr als das" - "We were only children to him".



Einzug Jäger-Bataillon
durch einen sozialen
Kreis. Oben: Werner
Mölders mit einer
Gruppe seiner Männer
am Tag seines Todestags.



Anti-Aircraft Gun
in Berlin



101/T Bf 109 E-1 White 7 of 1/JG 27 in flight over France in August 1940. Note the yellow engine cowling and the Gruppe emblem and the two-cylinder spinner with the tip in the Staffel colour of white.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 1./JG 27 circa mid-August 1940
This Bf 109 E-1 of 1./JG 27 was finished in an upper surface camouflage of RLM 02/71 with the fuselage sides being covered with a light coating of mottled RLM 02 over the RLM 05. The upper and lower cowlings have been painted yellow, as was probably the rudder. Likewise, it appears that the spinner is also yellow with possibly one quarter left in the original RLM 70 black-green with the tip being painted white in the Staffel colour.



101/H An unmarked Bf 109 E-1 of 1/JG 27 believed to have been photographed in France during the early summer of 1940. Just visible beneath the cockpit is the emblem of III/JG 53.
Art von Niedermann



101/H2 Otto Erwin Leykau climbs onto the cockpit of White 12 at Laon's aerodrome in early August 1940. As can be seen in this photograph, Leykau is wearing ordinary shoes rather than flying boots. This was considered more practical as, in the event of the pilot ditching, it was easier to remove shoes than the more cumbersome flying boots.

101/H3 In this photograph, Erwin Leykau has now settled in the cockpit of White 12. Of note are the small proportions of both the aircraft number and fuselage Balkenkreuz.



"It was a wonder that I was not shot at..."

SIEGFRIED BETHKE, JG 2

I was born on 24 June 1916 in Strassen, Pomerania. My mother's brother, Erich Voss, was in the Luftwaffe during the First World War, but he was shot down and killed in 1918 whilst serving as an air raid observer. In 1934, there was high unemployment in Germany. At the same time the military began to expand. There was also no opportunity for me to find higher education so as to develop a career. I was interested in becoming a pilot due to the fact that my uncle had been in the air force. At the beginning of 1935, after I had taken my Abitur, I went into the Navy to become a naval pilot. I reported to the naval school in Flensburg. Then I was transferred to the Luftwaffe in 1936 where I completed the A, B, and C (long-flying) courses at Celle.

My first unit assignment was at Bad Aibling. The unit later was redesignated JG 91. Douglas Dakotas were my Staffelkapitän. I was in his Staffel for one and a half years. Shortly before the war started I was transferred to Herzogenaurach. Then I went to Fürstenfeldbruck as an *Abfangjagdstaffel* with which I was Merschburg. On 1 May 1940, I was assigned to 2/JG 2, the Staffelkapitän of which was *Hauptmann* Karl-Heinz Gerster who had I Spatz.

During the French campaign, I scored four kills. My first kill was on 14 May near Sedan. I attacked a Morane 201 under my two cannon. The other three kills were a Potez 63 (in our archive it is listed as a Blériot 25 May at 10.00 (on 26 May at 09.40), and a Lett 451 (in reality a Douglas DB7 at 20.10). After shooting down the latter I attacked a seafly myself shot down over Amiens. The combat had taken place on 31 May at low-level and I was shot down either by the gun by Flak. I bailed out. The Lett had attempted to attack German troops. I landed between the lines and was rescued by German infantry. On the other side were coloured French colonial troops and it was a wonder that I had to go to a hospital in Cambrai. I sustained concussion and I was supposed to stay there ten days but I returned to my Staffel early on 4 June without the doctor's permission. My unit's doctor hadn't given me permission to fly since my injury had not healed. The unit moved from one base to another on conclusion of the campaign.

We deployed to the area of Rouen. I was promoted to Staffelkapitän when the previous commander took over a Gruppe. I commanded the Staffel for two and a half years until October 1942.

During the Battle of Britain I shot down Spitfires and Hurricanes. On 10 July 1940, I was flying a Bf 109E-4 over Southampton at 1,000 metres. I attacked them from behind and the first Hurricane hit me. I had to crash-land to avoid the debris. The pilot of the second Hurricane bailed out. My Staffel reported two other Hurricanes shot down during that clash being claimed by the future Schwerpunktträger, *Fritz* Rudorffer.



RIGHT AND BELOW: A Bf 109 E-1 of an unidentified Jagdgeschwader probably 5/JG 2, probably seen in France during the summer of 1940. The aircraft is probably Yellow 6 and - as is evident from the damage to the cockpit and the condition of the landing gear - probably in 'dark Camo 2' camouflage scheme with black tailfin.



Thumb and Hat emblem of
7./JG 2



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 7./JG 2
'White 5' of 7./JG 2 is finished in an upper surface scheme of RLM 02/71 with the sides of the fuselage and fin and rudder covered in a fairly dense mottle of the same. It carries the earlier style III. Gruppe symbol aft of the Balkenkreuz and on the cowling, the 7. Staffel 'Thumb on a Top Hat' emblem designed by Leutnant Hans Schmidt and Oberfeldwebel Erwin Klee.



LEFT: Bf 109 E-1 white 5 of 7./JG 2
seen from above at the airfield in the Pia de Cé area during the early summer of 1940. Visible on the cowling is the 7. Staffel 'Thumb on a Top Hat' emblem.



June-August 1940



LEFT AND BELOW: Two photographs showing a visiting He 111 landing at JG 2's airfield at Osterholz in early August 1940. Of note on the JG 2 Bf 109 in the foreground, is the heavily applied stipple masking over the RLM 65 on the fuselage side and the motor car type rear view mirror mounted on the canopy framework.



LEFT: Along with members of his ground crew, Gefr Josef Jopp (flage) is seen here after the emergency landing of his Bf 109 E-1 Black 9 of 9./JG 2 at Osterholz near Le Haver in early August 1940. The clearly visible 'Springwolf' Staffel emblem was taken from the family coat of arms of the Staffelkapitan, Uffz Alexander von Wimberfeldt who by this time, had been promoted to take command of III/JG 92, his position as Staffelkapitan taken by Obit KurtHeinz Mier.

June-August



9./JG 2
'Stochmücke'
(Mosquito) emblem



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 9./JG 2

'Yellow 8' of 9./JG 2 is believed to have been the usual mount of Lt. Radde or Römer, the designer of the Staffel emblem which consisted of a black and white 'Stechmücke' (mosquito) superimposed on a black-bordered white disc. The aircraft is thought to have been finished in a high demarcation RLM 70/73 scheme with heavy fuselage stripes 02 and 71 and carried the earlier III. Gruppe symbol aft of the Balkenkreuz with thin black border. In addition to the Staffel emblem the JG 2 shield was carried on the windscreens on both sides of the fuselage.



LEFT: Oberleutnant Walther Strampel, the III. Gruppe commander, stands with his adjutant, Major Hans-Joachim Wacker, during the campaign with 11. Jagdgeschwader. Wacker was promoted to command 3. Gr. 2 in 1942. June 1940

1940

Kfz 111 A pilot of 100.JG 51
drives his Sturmgeschütz on the
frontline near Beauvois-en-Cambrésis in the
Somme on 15 August 1940. Note the
white camouflage scheme denoting
a 'Frontgruppe' unit. The camouflage
on the background carrying white
bafflings is from 10.



100.JG 51 Posts of 100.JG 51 ready at
readiness in a field at Oiseville near
Le Havre at the beginning of August 1940.

Bf 109 Gef Lstv Jggs Bf 109 E-2
seen in the wing of 100.JG 51. Oberleutnant
Hans-Joachim Marseille of 100.JG 51
cropped out of this photo. This Bf 109 was
painted 100.JG 51 on 21 June 1940. Note the
ad-type of Käther Schuhwerk.



1940



100.JG 51 A Bf 109 E-2
of 100.JG 51 seen flying over
the coast of Normandy.



1./JG 51
'Kitzbüheler'
emblem



1./JG 51
'Mickey Mouse'
emblem



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3/JG 51
This Bf 109 E-3 of 1./JG 51, 'White 7' is finished in an upper scheme of D2/T1, with a
heavy fuselage mottle of both upper colours. Beneath the windscreen can be seen the
1./JG 51 'Kitzbüheler' goat emblem while beneath the rear of the canopy is the 'Mickey Mouse'
emblem of a stylised running mouse carrying a revolver. A Luftwaffe POW belonging to this
Gruppe who was interrogated at this time, stated that this unit was known as the 'Jägerdivision'.





II./JG 54
'Lion of Aspern' emblem



1211 The 'Lion of Aspern' emblem of II./JG 54 painted on the side of a Bf 109 during July 1940. The emblem features a lion rampant with a lance whose tip bears three black heraldic lions. The lower section of the background shield is red with a white cross.



1212 Pilots of III/JG 2 play with a canine friend whilst in readiness at a French airfield in early August 1940.



1213 A Bf 109 of III/JG 2, seen here with a large black dog-like animal painted on the fuselage, during the Battle of Britain.



1214 The emblem of 8./JG 26, white with black details and outlined in black, the Admason cartoon character and seen here in the cockpit of one of that unit's Bf 109s.



8./JG 26
'Admason' emblem



1215 An adapted version of the Admason dog-like animal emblem, featuring a Germania figure holding a German eagle, the latter having its wings spread wide.



"My aircraft rolled over and went into a spin..."

RUDOLF ROTHENFELDER, JG 2

I was born on 7 November 1918 at Kaufing in September 1939 I was a member of 1/JG 20 under the command of *Oberst* Walter Oesau with *Major* Siegfried Lehmann as *Griepenbommandeur* of 1. Gruppe, soon succeeded by *Hauptmann* Erwin Teuton. On 15 March 1940 several pilots were posted to the newly-created III/JG 2 under *Major* Dr. Mix. Together with my friend Peter Neumann-Merfle, I was posted to 9 Staffel under the command of *Oberst* Hannes Rödel I designed the Staffel emblem - a stinging fly on a yellow background which was our Staffel colour.

Following the successful campaign in the West, we left Brest-Wiré in France on 1 July 1940 to go to Frankfurt/Rhein/Main where we stayed until 26 July We then returned to Brest from where we started our 'battle of Britain'. On 29 July, our Geschwader moved to Le Havre-Octeville from where we would fly against England. The *Grundschlacht* together with the I and II. Gruppen moved to Beaumont-Le-Roger where there were intensive preparations for the offensive. On 1 August, our Geschwader was ready for action.

Equipment for our pilots was well-suited for the environment. We received a number of items which enabled us to survive over the Channel Front First, there was the yellow *Kobau* life jacket which was later replaced by an inflatable life vest Aflare pistol with the appropriate flares was attached to our leg and was to assist us by making us more observable if we went into the 'drift' Supplementing this was the yellow-dome pouch which would make it easier to spot us in the water from the air Special attention was given to the pouch which contained our emergency sea rations, besides chocolate with caffeine, Peritin tablets, and various other items, there was a small flask of French cognac which we took measures to continually replace! At first, flying over the Channel from Le Havre to the Isle of Wight was considered very difficult but we took measures to combat this fear before our fighters took off, our 'Nebelalarm' ('smoke clouds or pinheadiness') drew a smoke trail using smoke canisters which our crews could follow. We also set our heating systems, especially so when one of our comrades went into the water. We could then report to the Air Search and Rescue service as to what number comrade was the closest. The greatest disadvantage of course, was the fact that the British would also see the smoke and therefore know for certain when we would arrive and the course which our formations would be flying. It wasn't long before we had to relinquish the service of our 'Nebelalarm'. For sea rescue we used other measures. Neither the so-called 'Udet-boys', nor the flares did the trick. Despite the armament display of a Red Cross on their wings and fuselage, they were shot-up by the British. The best means of survival turned out to be the rubber dinghy which was dropped by parachute and the good old life jacket, not to mention the other rescue equipment. Last but not least, we trusted our comrades who reported our location on their return flight They did everything humanly possible to ensure that every means was taken to successfully land.

I must sing a song of praise to our comrades in the Navy and their rescue boats. These were small, fast boats which were always ready to go into action when we were flying against England and many of our comrades thanked them for saving their lives. The same praise must also go to the crews who were active in the Air Search and Rescue service who flew the flying boats, the He 59 and the Dornier 22.

The period 4–10 August was used to accustom ourselves with the different conditions of the Channel Front and the North Sea and to keep the Channel under surveillance. In between these sorties, we were always at readiness to take-off which was a policy which had been in effect since the start of the war and which was co-ordinated between the individual *Staffeln* of the *Gruppe*. Occasionally, we had visitors from the other side which triggered an immediate emergency take-off, but these were often without success. With a feeling of great suspense, we awaited our first operational orders to fly over to the 'opposite side'. To our surprise, on 10 August 1940 as we gathered together and chatted in our mess hall, our squadron leader, *Hannes Rödel*, was called to a briefing by the *Kommendeur* that evening at 21.30. We awaited the details of the forthcoming mission. We would fly first at low-level to transfer to Cherbourg-Théville where other single and twin-engine fighter units would assemble before flying in the direction of the Isle of Wight at noon. The operation was 'Top Secret' – the news was even to be kept from our ground personnel.

Everything happened the next morning – we took off at 06:00 hours from Le Havre and we arrived at Cherbourg-Théville at 06:45 hours. Units came from every conceivable direction – the I and II. Gruppen including the JG 2 *Geschwader* Staff, our comrades from the *Mölders Jagdgeschwader* and several twin-engined *Zerstörer* units landed at the base. After receiving final instructions, we took off on our first mission against England at 10:55 hours on 11 August 1940. It was a truly uplifting sight to see what we had assembled in the air. They came not only from Cherbourg but also the other airfields in the region. There were 400–500 fighters and *Zerstörer* (Me 109 Is and Me 110s) which were flying at various altitudes towards the Isle of Wight. Our Staffel flew top cover at about 9000 metres and we could see, in the distance, that our fear that the British would not come up to engage us was groundless. Over Portland there was already an intensive air combat in progress and we could see the first parachutes drifting to earth. In the water below, we recognised green patches which indicated our pilots. The enemy had sent up 500 aircraft – Spitfires, Hurricanes and Beaufighters – which were now engaged in wild dogfights with us.

I was flying in a *Rotte* element with *Oberleutnant* Fricke, who was flying his first combat sortie, when we were attacked from above and out of the sun by six Spitfires. Over the radio, I warned my comrade who unfortunately failed to react as the Spitfire was getting into position behind me. I pulled up at full throttle and my aircraft rolled over and went into a spin right into the mass of fighting aircraft until I reached about 6000 metres. I managed to bring my aircraft under control and pull out of the dive. As I saw Fricke's aircraft burning and diving towards the earth he was unable to bail out.

The first combat had to be broken off when we were low on fuel. 0607 Röder and Lt. Kluge had each shot down a Hurricane. As I was flying back to base, I caught a Spitfire which went into the sea burning but unfortunately I did not have a witness.

The first battle of the campaign over Portland was very successful for us. According to our own reports, we had scored 195 kills and we had lost 46 aircraft. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of these statistics but they must be fairly accurate.



Bf 109 E-4 The emblem of 1/JG 20 – a yellow tiger's head with red, white and black details.

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of Stab III/JG 54

This Bf 109 E-4, flown by *Oberst* Albrecht Drehs, force-landed at Hengrove near Margate, Kent on 12 August. Upper surface camouflage is RLM 02/73 with a yellow stripe applied to the sides of the fuselage and fin and rudder in a style common to JG 54. The III./JG 54 emblem was carried on both sides of the cowling and the Stabs Winkel and bar were white with a thin black border.



JG 54 Emblem
The emblem of JG 54 – a member of the service
with a shield containing a sword, a lion and a eagle.
Stab Winkel
Stab bar
Stab emblem



JG 54 Emblem

which is superimposed on a white Jesus cross and three white aircraft silhouettes. As can be seen in the photograph, at this early date, JG 54 had already begun to experiment with various paint schemes adding different colours to turn down the highly visible blue sides of their aircraft.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 2/JG 52 belonging to Uffz. Leo Zaubrecher
 'Red 14', the Bf 109 E-1 of Uffz. Leo Zaubrecher of 2/JG 52 was forced to land in a field near Lewes after being damaged in combat by P/O J. McIntosh of 618 Sqn. during the early afternoon of 32 August 1940. It carried a high demarcation upper camouflage of RLM 02/72, and the red painted 2 Staffel 'Little Devil' emblem superimposed on a white disc was painted on the port cowling only. The aircraft was also fitted with a rear view mirror mounted on the windscreen framing. Although shown in this profile with a red forward cowl tip, it is understood that some eye-witness reports stated that the spinner was red. However, whether these reports referred to the entire spinner or just the tip is not known for certain.

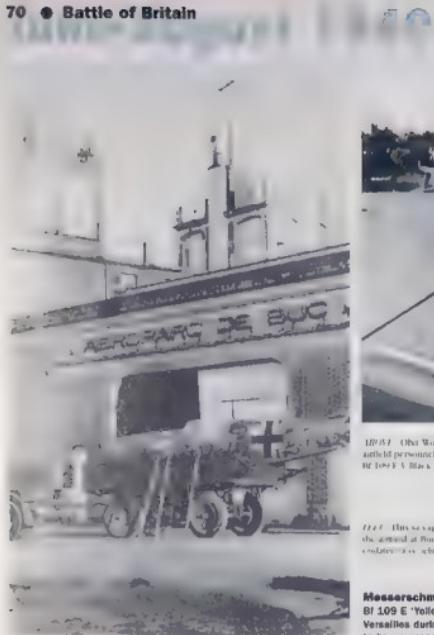
Devil emblem of
2/JG 52 (early)

BEDF8 - August 12 1940 - and Uffz. Zaubrecher's Bf 109 E-1 Red 14 of 2/JG 52 lies in a field at Mays Farm, near Seaford, Sussex after being damaged in an earlier dogfight above Hastings.



BEDF8 - War
 correspondent, generally
 Warrant Officer Police
 officers take a closer
 look at the remains of
 a Bf 109 E-1 in the
 Sussex fields after
 it was shot down by
 a Hurricane from 12
 Sqn. - and Uffz. Leo
 Zaubrecher's aircraft
 which was shot down
 earlier in the day.
 Photo: Wark





109E Oberleutnant Wolfgang Uebel Staffelkapitän of 2/JG 52 in discussion with staff and personnel at Calais in August 1940 following his return from a sortie. II+BF 109E 4/V Black 1 can be seen behind.



109E This second Bf 109 E-1 'Yellow 7' of 8./JG 52 has been repainted by the German Air Force in Normandy's pre-war colours being seen for inspection. Although evidence of the original camouflage paintwork was taken during early August 1940.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 8./JG 51
Bf 109 E 'Yellow 7' of 8./JG 52 seen at the Aeroparc at Buc near Versailles during the summer of 1940. Finished in what is believed to be an upper surface scheme of 02/73, the fuselage sides are heavily mottled in one or both of these colours. The Staffel weeping bird emblem aft of the Balkenkreuz carries a red umbrella with brown or black details, while the body of the bird is understood to be brown with black and white details superimposed on a white shield with a thin black outline. It is not known with any certainty if the 'Gott Strafe England' motto was carried beneath the bird.



109E Pilots of Bf 109 E-7 of 1/JG 52 at Aalborg in Denmark relax in the shade after a successful mission. The aircraft appears to have suffered engine trouble, suggesting the wreckage was caused by a forced landing. Note the lack of identification markings on the fuselage, which is unusual for the era, the home and the Max rats.





1117 AND 1118 Two views of the 3/JG 51 Staffel emblem carried by some of that Staffel's crew during 1940. The cartoon mountain figure with a mask over one shoulder and carrying a brace of Spittles was derived from the children's book *Steinweipfer*.



1119 Photgraphs of 3/JG 51, probably photographed at Abbeville France in early August 1940. From left to right: Uffz Heinz Maak; Fw Heinz Kitz; Uffz Herbert Böckeler; Uffz Josef Opholeck; Obdts Hans-Joachim Jäger (Staffelkapitän from 6 August); Uffz Theut; Uffz Erwin Flieg and Uffz Maller. Note the Mickey Mouse staffel emblem at the entrance to the building. Of these pilots, Opholeck was killed in action on 23 August Bar-le-Duc, Böckeler on 25 August 1940 with his Leibfahrt (EL) and Schwerte Pippin, the Rks with EL and Flieg the Rks.



1120 Members of 1/JG 52 relaxing at readiness. Third from left is Herbert Böckeler.



1121 Black 10 - 99 109 1-1 of an unidentified staffel lies damaged in a French field. Interestingly it has been fitted with the later式 canopy frame and the usual open head armour. Note also this aircraft st. 1 has the gun ports edged in yellow.



1122 Staffel 10 - 99 109 1-1 of an unidentified staffel lies damaged in a French field. The pilot, Uffz Hermann Mack, was captured. In previous photographs of this aircraft taken on 10 August 1940, the aircraft carried the Staffel 10 emblem.



1123 Black 10 - 99 109 1-1 of an unidentified staffel lies damaged in a French field. The pilot, Uffz Hermann Mack, was captured. In previous photographs of this aircraft taken on 10 August 1940, the aircraft carried the Staffel 10 emblem.

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E Camouflage and Markings 1939–1940

Combining the subtleties of the camouflage in broad patterns with the Bf 109 Es during the Battle of Britain presents an intriguing but complicated challenge. While it is known for the most part that the undersurface colour was usually a ready-stencil flatlie light blue, e.g. Light Blue 65 (RLM 65 Hellblau), the diversity in upper surface patterns and colours is far more difficult to ascertain.



Splinter Scheme or Single Colour?

A careful study of photographs of early Bf 109s reveals that the upper surface splinter camouflage patterns of Black-Green 70 (RLM 70 Schwarzgrün) and Dark Green 71 (RLM 71 Dunkelgrün) were applied with sharply defined, angular demarcation lines in keeping with standard Luftwaffe camouflage practice. The splinter patterns applied to the Bf 109B, C and D variants were similarly typical for the E 1 and E 3 which, as with the earlier models, displayed considerable variation on the fuselage sides where the pattern in plan view was extended down to meet the undersurface colour. This remained essentially unchanged until the final months of 1939 when a more simplified form of 70/71 splinter pattern began to make its appearance on some E models.

By the outbreak of war in September 1939, the camouflaged upper surfaces of Bf 109s were regularly identified as being dark green, implying the use of a single colour rather than the two dark greens officially specified by the Reichsluftfahrtministerium (RLM) in L-Dv 52/1 issued in March 1938. Did these observations accurately record that a single upper camouflage colour was being used or did the low tonal contrast between them prevent clear identification of



ABOVE: A clear photo of the Bf 109 E 1, later III./JG 27, which, from careful study of photographs, appears to have been finished in a single upper surface colour of either 70 or 71. As with a number of similar Bf 109 E photographs that have been subjected to close scrutiny to date, no firm upper surface colour has yet been determined. This has led to the belief that, initially, some of these early models carried, at least temporarily, a single colour upper surface.



III./JG 27
'Jesau Kreuz' emblem

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of I./JG 1, later III./JG 27

A Bf 109 E-1, Red 9 of III./JG 27 which, from careful study of photographs, appears to have been finished in a single upper surface colour of either 70 or 71. As with a number of similar Bf 109 E photographs that have been subjected to close scrutiny to date, no firm upper surface colour has yet been determined. This has led to the belief that, initially, some of these early models carried, at least temporarily, a single colour upper surface.





L997 The original print of the photograph above, and other views of this Bf 109 E-4 of II/JG 51 (O/JG 76) have been subjected to careful examination but no evidence of a second upper camouflage colour has been identified with certainty.

the two colours or, more simply, was this due to fading through in-service use and weathering?

During late 1939 – early 1940 and with the Luftwaffe fully committed to its wartime operations, the probability of a single upper camouflage colour being applied to individual aircraft or those of a specific unit is entirely credible. Although no valid or supportable documentary evidence of any Bf 109s with a single upper camouflage colour during this period has yet been discovered, it remains entirely plausible to assume that, for whatever reason, some aircraft may have received a single colour finish to the upper surfaces on either a temporary or permanent basis.

In the recent careful examination of a number of good quality original photographs, the presence of a single upper surface colour on some aircraft is strongly indicated as may be seen in the accompanying photographs. In the careful scrutiny of these original prints, to date, no discernible evidence of a second colour has been determined with complete certainty. Nevertheless, and until factual evidence to the contrary is discovered, it may perhaps be presumed that contemporary references to a single dark green are nothing more than a broad generalisation of the camouflage colour, the singular 'dark green' reference possibly being due to the low tonal contrast between these two colours?

R997 This Bf 109 E-5 from 10/JG 53 was at Sennelager in November 1939. The aircraft was finished in the then standard four-colour camouflage of '02/71 over 65/under-surfaces'.



The Colours Change

The fighting in Poland made it clear that while the standard 70/71 Bf 109 camouflage scheme at the outbreak of war was more than adequate for ground concealment, the same did not apply to aerial combat. As a result of these findings, numerous field trials to find a suitable replacement were undertaken during the winter of 1939-40 utilising various colours Grüngrau (aka RLM 02), 70, 70 and 71. The successful outcome of these trials resulted in a new camouflage pattern of 02 and 71 that was considered more practical for air-to-air combat than the earlier scheme. Accordingly, an order was issued dictating that 02 would be Green 70 in the pattern. Concurrently, the demarcation for the undersurface Blue 65 was increased in height to cover approximately three-quarters of the fuselage sides, including the entire vertical tail surfaces. Although this change effectively restricted the strict plan view of the aircraft, the actual height of the demarcation varied from aircraft, most prominently on the rear fuselage between the rear of the cockpit and the end of the fin.

Beginning in early 1940 with production of the Bf 109 E-4, the 02/71 scheme was adopted as a factory finish, whereas the earlier E models already in service appear to have been repainted at either local or unit level, with the attendant broad interpretation of the original order. Some units were noticeably slower than others in implementing the changes, so those repainting their aircraft promptly, it must be realised that not all aircraft within the unit would or could be repainted at the same time. On some aircraft the 02 replaced the 71 rather than the Black-Green 70 as directed, while on many others the entire fuselage, tail and fuse were repainted, leaving the wing and fuselage root sections in the old colours. That this occurred is evident from photographs and the contents of summaries, which indicates that a number of Bf 109s in these 'unofficial' fin patterns entered the autumn of 1940. Furthermore, it is entirely possible that some aircraft were either older aircraft or those held as reserve or spare aircraft, retaining the





Two early 1940 photographs of Red 9 of 2./JG 2 in the newly applied '71/02' scheme with the high demarcation line for the underside RLM 65. Also visible on the upper surfaces of the wings is one of the many variations in the splinter camouflage pattern.

JG 2 'Richthofen'
Geschwader badge as
designed by
Lt. Adalbert von Rothkirch und Panthen

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 W.Nr. 4859 'Red 9' of 2./Staffel

The aircraft is depicted prior to the beginning of the Battle of Britain when 2.Staffel was still using red numerals. Although the Hakenkreuz remains in the earlier position across both fin and rudder, it is finished in the high demarcation 02/71 scheme.

they were either lost on operations or underwent major servicing, at which time the newer scheme would, presumably, have been applied.

With these changes, which included revisions to the size, style and placement of the national insignia, several different examples of a simplified splinter scheme, including mirror image reversal patterns, began to appear. In these, the colour divisions were far less angular than those of the original patterns and are often seen in photographs to have a feathered rather than sharp demarcation. Although official confirmation for this simplification is unavailable, it is reasonable to assume that they were implemented as a means both to expedite service requirements and to save on materials and cost, regardless of whether the finish was of factory or in-service origin.

Summer 1940

As the aerial battles developed above the southeastern coast of Britain and the English Channel in the early summer of 1940, it soon became clear that again more changes would be necessary to the camouflage worn by Bf 109s. Whereas the 02/71/65 scheme had worked sufficiently well over France and the Low Countries, it was found that this was not the case in the air war against England. The high demarcation level of Blue 65 on fuselage sides and tails made the aircraft stand out conspicuously against the waters of the Channel and the English countryside. To overcome this, several methods were employed to tone down the blue, the most common being an application of matting to fuselage sides in either 02 and/or one or both of the upper colours. One of the earliest reports of this occurred in mid July when Bf 109s of JG 51 were reported as having a fine, pale grey 'overspray' applied to their fuselage sides; an indication perhaps of one of the first uses of 02. Taking into account the requirement to tone these areas down, it is entirely feasible that this order was originated, either at RLM level or from local area command staff, RLM 65, allowing individual units, notably JG's 2, 53 and 54, to determine the extent and style of application as was dictated by their operational requirements. As the variation in style was far too extensive to describe in detail, it must be realised that while the same basic scheme between individual units, a general uniformity of style and pattern was usually seen amongst aircraft of the same unit. Believed for the most part to have been 02, it was usually sprayed onto the sides of the fuselage and fin in varying degrees of density and pattern. On some aircraft this was occasionally intensified, usually where a colour transition was made such as at the roots of the wings or tailplane, by the random inclusion of one or both of the upper colours. In contrast, the mattling applied by some units was in a much coarser form, suggesting the use of a brush or sponge, frequently so dense that it took on the appearance of an almost solid colour. Noticeably, many aircraft wearing this coarse, stippled finish (e.g. JG 2) also displayed a modified fuselage cross where the proportions of the white segments were reduced in area to decrease their visibility. Similarly, the height of demarcation between upper and lower colours was often altered, with segments of the upper fuselage colours being extended down the fuselage sides to random depths along its length. However some units, notably the third Gruppe of JG 26, were markedly reluctant to add any form of additional camouflage to their aircraft and throughout 1940, retained the high demarcation finish with fuselage crosses and numerals repeated in a smaller format than usual to help conceal the aircraft at higher altitudes.





Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 of 1./JG 2

This Bf 109 E-3, 'White 13' of 1./JG 2 is seen as it would have appeared in May 1940 wearing a very high demarcation 02/T1 upper surface scheme. The small proportions of the fuselage cross and the position of the Hakenkreuz across the fin/rudder hinge line indicate that this is probably one of the earliest applications of the revised camouflage scheme. On the nose is the 'Borzo dog' Staffel emblem designed by Otto Bertram while the white '13' has a thin black border.



1./JG 2
'Borzo dog'
Staffel emblem



With more fighter engagements taking place over the sea and increasing numbers of replacement aircraft entering service, camouflage variations became all the more widespread, often becoming more varied when hazy interchangeable parts, such as cowlings, rudders, engine access panels and battery hatch covers were swapped between aircraft to expedite servicing. Additionally two further anomalies appeared for which, to date, no firm explanation has been determined. The first was a lighter center to wing crosses that may or may not have been a part of the random light camouflage overspray occasionally seen on wings, or was perhaps, evidence of the overall mottled finish seen and documented as being applied to some Bf 109 Es during 1940. Although no documentary evidence to support this has been found, it is reasonable to assume that the additional colour was applied to reduce the visibility of the wing crosses and blend them in to the upper surface camouflage, thus helping to conceal the aircraft from observation from above.

The second anomaly and one which is evident in many photos of Bf 109s from the period, was the use of a light colour that wrapped around the upper leading edges of the main wings and may clearly be seen in photos such as those of the aircraft of Obt. Paul Temme of Stab/JG 2 who force landed beside Shoreham airfield on 13 August. From the detailed examination of photographs of aircraft with this feature it is currently believed that this was in fact, a continuation of the underside Blau 65 or similar light colour, extended to encompass the areas of wing leading edge visible in a head-on view. Whether this was an attempt to break up the outline of the wings when viewed from head-on or an application characteristic of the location where the camouflage finish was applied has not, to date, been determined with any certainty.



RIGHT AND BELOW: An example of one of the adaptations of fuselage mottling applied by JG 54 can be seen in this view of 'Yellow 13' of 9 Staffel. Also clearly visible is the black boudoir yellow 'Waffenfarbe' panel containing the Staffel emblem; the head is red with black and white detail.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of 9./JG 54

The photograph above and this colour profile of 'Yellow 13', a Bf 109 E-4 of 9./JG 54 illustrates one of the variations in the striped mottling commonly used by this unit. In this instance, diagonally sprayed stripes of what appears to be T1 have been applied to break up the blue of the fin, rudder and fuselage sides.



9./JG 54



Luftwaffe Bf 109s of I./JG 53 take off from a secret base in undisturbed surface in France. What is seen here is a light mottled scheme based on the basic U2/U3A scheme, the nose black or red. I./JG 53 used this scheme also applied to the wings and fuselage. It also carries the Balkenkreuz at the very rear of the fuselage, which is longer than the early type. (Lockheed)



Luftwaffe Set up for weapons calibration, this Bf 109 F of 6/JG 53 shows the characteristic dark grey underneath the fuselage. (Peter Mander Collection)

Grey Camouflage?

Although often totally destroyed, all enemy aircraft that came down in the British Isles during the Second World War were thoroughly examined by intelligence teams from the Air Ministry and RAF. The reports created from these examinations were known as Crashed Enemy Aircraft Reports, and recorded such information as Werk Nummer, engine type, armament, additional or special equipment and markings and colours. However, and to the disappointment of many post-war researchers, there were no set guidelines in these reports for describing the shades of the colour found on downed German aircraft. Generally, any examination of the paint was confined to an evaluation of the type of finish and occasionally, some undamaged panels would be tested for paint durability.

By mid-August, the first uses of greys and blue-greys as an upper camouflage colour were making their appearance in these reports, appearing with increasing frequency as the battle progressed. Light Navy grey, 'two shades of grey' (light grey with dark grey mottling), Beaufighter grey and 'camouflage grey' were some of the descriptions recorded, along with mention of varying shades of green-grey and blue-grey. Were these an indication of the earliest use of the greys 74 (RLM 74 Dunkengrau) and 75 (RLM 75 Mittelgrau) that would become the standard fighter camouflaging in the following year or, as recent research and the variety in their descriptions suggest, that they were colours created at unit level?

As illustrated on page 89, it can be seen that by mixing various percentages or combinations of RLM 02, 65, 66, 70 and 71, a number of grey and blue-grey shades could have been created, all of which would have been suitable for use, thus providing a perfectly credible probability that this is, in fact, what happened. As the use of the greys 74 and 75 was not officially promulgated until the November 1941 issue of L DV 521/1, the likelihood that the assorted greys used during 1940 were those from which the 74 and 75 were developed is a wholly convincing possibility.



Luftwaffe As may be seen here, the Balkenkreuze on the upper wing surfaces of a number of Bf 109s during mid to late 1940 were at partially covered by light mottling to match the upper wing of Lt Johannes Pöhl's Bf 109I as shown.



JG 26 Schlägertag emblem



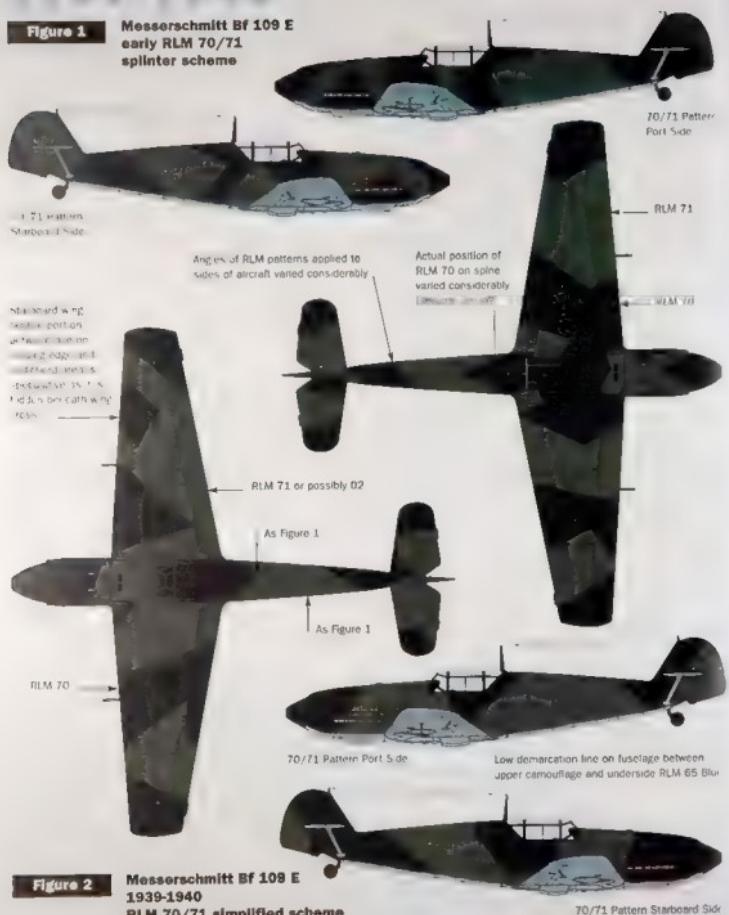
Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 6./JG 26 May 1940

Seen at Bruglette, Belgium at the end of May 1940. Yellow 2 of 6./JG 26 was wearing a lightly applied mottle to the upper surface 92 and 71 on the fuselage. Beneath the windscreen can be seen the stylised JG 26 Schlägertag emblem.



ABOVE The Bf 109 E-1 White 2 flown by Hans-Joachim Marseille of 6./JG 26. The photographs on the left show the visibility of the upper wing Balkenkreuze have been subdued by a light mottling paint. Also evident in this view is the light random application of RLM 02 patches on the upper surfaces of wings and tailplane.

Figure 1
Messerschmitt Bf 109 E
early RLM 70/71
splinter scheme



Demarcation height variations

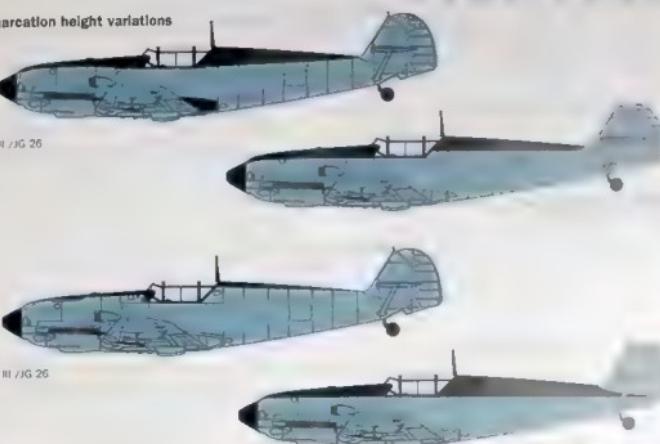


Figure 3
Messerschmitt Bf 109 E
simplified variation 1940

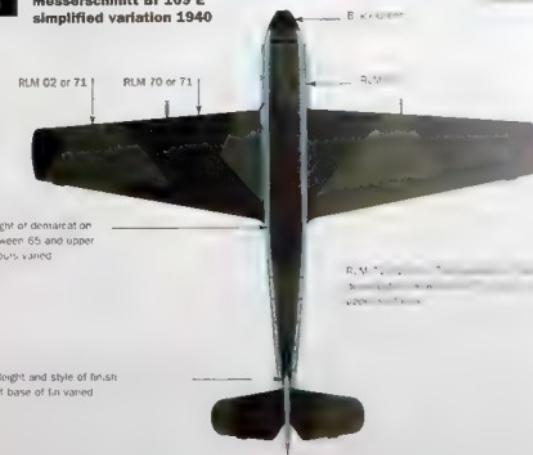


Figure 2
Messerschmitt Bf 109 E
1939-1940
RLM 70/71 simplified scheme

Figure 4

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E simplified variation – summer 1940; possibly 'soft-edged'

As with the earlier 'high demarcation' scheme, variations in the height of the demarcation were widespread

**Figure 5**

Simplified RLM 71/02 scheme with 02 or similar mottling on fuselage sides

As with Figures 3 and 4 it would appear that the demarcation between the 71 and 02 was often soft rather than hard

Mottling, when applied, differed considerably between units

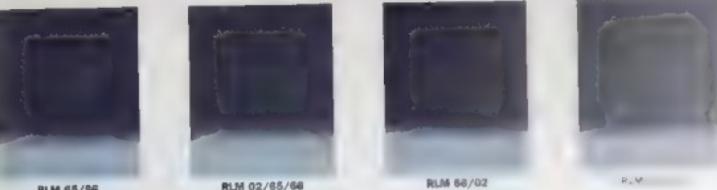
**Figure 6**

JG 53, Pk As

III/JG 54

Four examples of Grey shade variations made from various RLM paint mixes

Although difficult to represent accurately in printed form, these four panels serve to illustrate an approximation of some of the grey shades that could be obtained by combining various quantities of readily available paints such as 02, 65, 68, 70 and 71.

**Figure 7**

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E W.Nr. 3576
October 1940, Uffz. Amo Zimmermann
7./JG 54, in simplified 'grey' scheme

**Scheme 1**

Example of grey scheme based on crash reports and photographs

Scheme 2

Very high demarcation between upper fuselage camouflage colours and Blue 65 sides. In Scheme 1 mottling appears on blue sides and continues beneath tailplane to leading edge of rudder. This mottling is also present on the wing root fairings

Gruppenstab and Staffel Markings and Colours

Stab Markings

The origins of markings for Stab personnel date back to the pre-war period, being allocated to three officers of the *Geschwaderstab*, the Kommodore, his Adjutant and the officer in charge of flying operations. Correspondingly for the *Gruppenstab*, similar symbols were allocated to the *Gruppenkommodore*, Adjutant and Operations officer.

The entry into service of the Bf 109 made it apparent that the earlier Stab symbols would need revising. Accordingly, *Fl.Mit. 3 Nr.730/37* of 9 issued on 14 December 1937 by the *Generstab der Luftwaffe* included a set of instructions and diagrams for the application of markings to fighter aircraft. Apart from containing detailed instructions on the dimensions of numerals and the i spacing, new locations and dimensions for Stab symbols were designated including a vertical bar symbol to be applied aft of the fuselage cross to signify III Gruppe instead of the earlier wavy line symbol. A horizontal bar aft of the fuselage cross identified the aircraft of I. Gruppe while those from II. Gruppe carried no symbol. All symbols were to be applied in black with white edging and a thin black outline although it is evident in photographs and other records that these markings were not always applied in either the colours or locations officially specified. Despite the clearly worded instructions regarding the II Gruppe marking, at least two Jagdgeschwader, JG 2 & JG 52 declined to effect the change, retaining instead the earlier wavy line Gruppe symbol. In a similar fashion, III./JG 2 and JG 54 also declined to follow the wording of the directive by using white as the predominant colour for their Stab symbols, usually outlining them with a thin black edge. Likewise, II./JG 51 also declined to display their Gruppe bar by using the designated area to display their 'weeping bird' emblem instead of the required symbol.

Staffel Markings

The ordinary Staffel aircraft carried a number which identified the individual aircraft within the Staffel, and the colour in which it was painted identifying the Staffel within the Geschwader. These numbers were generally applied in one of two forms with the figures from 2 to 9 appearing in either a 'rounded' or 'squared' style that usually remained constant within the various Staffeln.

Although regularly positioned ahead of the fuselage cross, some units did adopt alternative locations for these numbers. III./JG 27 chose to apply them to either side of the cowling beneath the gun trough while II./JG 54 placed theirs on either side of the forward fuselage, just aft of the rear edge of the engine cowling. Likewise, there were also exceptions to the rule for Staffel colours, on several occasions, red was recorded as replacing the normal black of the second, fifth and eighth Staffeln, the third Jagd Staffel of LG 2, used brown instead of yellow and 5 Staffel of JG 53 is recorded as using grey numerals throughout 1940.

Sommers too received their share of colours. These were often repainted in black and white in the form of halves or quarters or would merely have a segment of white applied to the base Black-Green/T0 spinner colour. In many instances the spinner tip or cap, if fitted, would often be painted in the Staffel or Staffel colour. While there are no reports of the 1944 'Spratzschauze' style of design being used at this time, those coloured bands that were painted on Bf 109 E spinners during 1940 are recorded as being applied in concentric circles.

Colours

1, II & III Gruppenstab	Green
1, 4 & 7 Staffeln	White
2, 5 & 8 Staffeln	Black (or Red)
3, 6 & 9 Staffeln	Yellow (or Brown)

The Red Band of JG 53

For a short period during 1940, all three Gruppen of JG 53, and only JG 53, displayed two distinct anomalies in their markings, the purposes of which have yet to be fully resolved.

The first anomaly concerns the replacement of the 'Pik As' (Ace of Spades) emblem according to RAF Air Ministry Weekly Intelligence Summary No.60, Hermann Göring ordered the emblem be removed and replaced with a red band and the Geschwader renamed the 'Red Ring'



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 of II./JG 53

Identified as the Bf 109 E-3 belonging to Hptm. Günther von Maltzahn, Gruppenkommandeur of II./JG 53, this profile illustrates one of the variations of the cowling band carried by aircraft of the unit between August and October 1940. It replaced the unit's PkAs emblem. In early October, shortly after von Maltzahn promoted to take over command of the Geschwader from Major von Cramon Taubadel, the red band was dispensed with and replaced with a newer style of PkAs.



Geschwader'. While there is some evidence to suggest that it may have stemmed from personal antipathy on the part of Göring, or possibly from some ideological difference with the leadership of the Geschwader, (H.J. von Cramon Taubadel is understood to have had a Jewish wife), the actual reason for the order has yet to be determined. In the past, several theories for this change have been examined in depth, but most have been subsequently disproven although one, containing some merit, submits that it may have been nothing more than a temporary identification feature. However, there was one event which transpired at this time and another which may have been of some significance. During early August at the time of the appearance of these red bands, Göring replaced the majority of the Jagdwaffe Kommodore with younger men, although two units serving with Luftflotte 3, JG 27 and JG 53 retained their existing Kommodore until October. Then, at the beginning of that month, after Obit. Günther von Maltzahn took command of the Geschwader from Obit. Hans-Jürgen von Cramon Taubadel, the 'Pik As' emblem began to reappear on JG 53's aircraft in a somewhat

newer and larger format than previously seen. As a matter of interest, the first recorded incident of a Bf 109 E being brought down over England where the red band had replaced the 'Pik As' emblem occurred on 16 August. On that date the aircraft of Fw. Christian Hansen of 2/JG 53 force landed at Godsh J on the Isle of Wight and whose exact model was reported in Crashed Enemy Aircraft Report No.11 as having a "...red band around nose 6 in wide".

The second anomaly and one frequently recorded as a political gesture on the part of the Geschwader, occurred almost concurrently with the re-introduction of the 'Pik As' emblem. Many aircraft from II. and III. Gruppen had the Hakenkreuz on their fins overlaid, with several pilots using these areas to display their individual Abschuss tallys rather than in the more usual location on the rudder (e.g. Lt. Schmidt, Adjutant of III./JG 53). How long this lasted is not known for certain but some aircraft of I. Gruppe were recorded as still without their Hakenkreuz in late November.

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of III./JG 53

The Bf 109 E-4 of Lt. Erich Schmidt, Adjutant of III./JG 53 in November 1940. Finished what it is understood to be an upper scheme of locally mixed greys, the 'Pik As' emblem has replaced the 'Red Ring' and like other aircraft of the Gruppe, the Swastika has been painted out; in this case being replaced by the pilot's 'Abschuss' tally.



BETWEEN Photographed at Eupen during November 1940, these two aircraft of the Gruppenstab III./JG 53 illustrate the second markings as may seen in the aircraft of this unit - the overpainted Hakenkreuz. The aircraft in the foreground is that of the adjtnt Lt. Erich Schmidt, while that in the background with the 'Pik As' emblem clearly visible on the cowling is flown by the Kommandeur Wlf. Wacker.



JG 53 Pik As
Geschwader



Tactical Markings

The requirement that visually, a military aircraft should be distinguishable from friendly forces is something of a practical impossibility. In the history of military aviation numerous methods to resolve this problem have been used. With the Luftwaffe it was no different. In mid-August, the first incidents of aircraft carrying distinctive yellow markings were being reported by RAF pilots. Originally denoting aircraft belonging to a 'squadron of aces', this assumption was

The earliest examples of the use of these markings, recorded as early as 1939, were recorded as carrying areas of yellow paint applied to wing and tail surfaces, to top sections of rudders and on occasion to the vertical trailing edge surfaces. There is little doubt that these markings were established as a result of the war where such conspicuous markings were available to both sides. An approximate value, the Jagdwaffe were quick to increase the use of such colours to include entire rudders. Whereas the application of either yellow or white paint to wings remained relatively constant from unit to unit, this was often not the case with rudders were concerned.

On rudders, it first appeared in the form of an inverted triangle area which may be seen in photographs of Gerhard Schöpfel's Bf 109 of III./JG 26 circa August 1939. Long after this, other Bf 109 Es, often noted as being from III./JG 54, were recorded as approximating one-third of the rear vertical rudder surface painted yellow or possibly white, while on the Bf 109s of other units, the entire rudder was finished in yellow. In these cases, when the rudder was painted, the exact area covered often varied as occasionally the entire rudder or even the leading edge would be left white. The original blue 65 would be left on which the pilot would display his 'Abschuss' tally using a mark as black or red vertical bars that often identified the nationality of the victim and the date of victory. In addition to these variations, at least two Bf 109 Es of the period were known where the entire fin and rudder were also painted in yellow but based on currently available information, these are seen to be the exception rather than the rule at this time.

**Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 of 7./JG 26**

'White 6' of 7./JG 26 illustrates the early form of yellow rudder marking that was beginning to make its appearance on Bf 109s during the middle of August 1940. Initially starting off as shown here, it later increased to cover the rear half of the rudder surface and finally the entire surface.



With cowlings, it can be seen from photographs that the area covered by white or yellow paint varied considerably between aircraft, often extending rearwards as far as the base of the windshield. Any unit emblems that would otherwise be hidden by this paint were usually masked off carefully, and two such units, I./JG 3 and III./JG 27, masked off the distinctive JG 3 'Tatzelwurm' and JG 27 numbers so as to leave them on a conspicuous rectangular background of the camouflage colour. From late August on, it is unusual to find a photograph of a Bf 109 E without some part of its airframe covered in either yellow or white paint, and to date, no significant explanation for the use of the two different colours has been ascertained, suggesting that they may have been used somewhat indiscriminately. In addition to the use of

LEFT: Bf 109 E-3
'White 6' of 7./JG 26 on
which the early
application of yellow
paint to the top
portion of the rudder
can clearly be seen.



9./JG 51
'Axt von Niedernheim'
emblem

ABOVE: Badly
damaged, Bf 109 E-1,
'Yellow 13' of 9./JG 51
lays on a French beach
during the summer of
1940. Seen to
advantage is the early
application of yellow
paint to rudders which
took the form of an
inverted triangular
area at the top of the
rudder.

yellow and white for these tactical markings, it is also claimed by some sources that red was likewise used for the same purpose. However, despite several detailed investigations, no photographic or documentary evidence whatsoever has been discovered to support this.

Although some references suggest that the change from yellow to white occurred at the end of August, it is evident from the contents of Crashed Enemy Aircraft Reports for the month of September that both colours were being used concurrently by different units during that time. As far as current research has shown, it would appear that this use of white lasted only for a period of approximately three or four weeks and was seemingly confined in the main to units based within a small sector of occupied France. During the last week of August, the fighter units of Luftflotte 3 were placed under the control of Luftflotte 2 when the bomber units of the former were temporarily withdrawn from daylight operations in order to join the night attacks on centres of industry in the Midlands. However, whether or not this was in any way connected with the use of the white tactical markings for the single-engined fighter force, remains a matter of speculation for the present.

Summary

While it is a well-recognised fact that the RLM had a clearly defined administrative intent to regulate Luftwaffe camouflage practices, it must also be distinctly understood that, as surviving documentary and photographic evidence reveals, there were many exceptions to its established edicts. Unfortunately, since very few original documents or diagrams are available from which definitive information can be obtained, much of the interpretation for these variations must rely heavily on informed and educated speculation based upon such material and knowledge as is currently available.



BELOW: Bf 109 E-3s of JG 2 sit concealed beneath the trees at Calais-Marcq while unit personnel improve the effect by suspending camouflage nets above them. In the foreground, Brown 14, in similar fashion to other aircraft of the unit, has only the rear half of the rudder painted yellow. The speckled appearance of its upper surfaces are not a mottled paint scheme but due to the sunlight filtering through the branches and camouflage netting. Not the unknown badge behind the fuselage cross.



ABOVE: The church spire in the distance identifies this as Calais-Marcq airfield where the fighters of JG 2 are preparing for a mass take-off. On the rudder of the Bf 109 E-3 at left it can be seen that only the rear half carries yellow paint, a not uncommon practice on aircraft of this unit. Later in the war the church was bombed by the USAAP during a raid on the airfield.

Figure 8

**Yellow and White Areas
(approximation of areas covered
when yellow or white used)**



This photo taken during the later stages of the battle serves to illustrate where white or yellow paint has been applied to both upper and lower cowlings and spinner. In this view it can be seen that only the rear half carries yellow paint, a not uncommon practice on aircraft of this unit. Later in the war the church was bombed by the USAAP during a raid on the airfield.

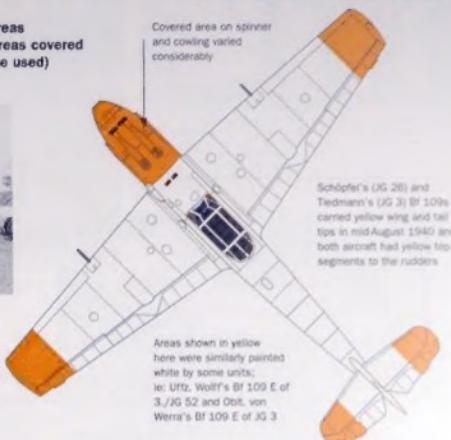


Figure 9

**Examples of variations in the application of yellow or white tactical(?) markings,
Summer 1940**

Von Werra, II./JG 3



Note: Spinner colours varied considerably ranging from completely yellow or white or black-green to various permutations.

Variation 1
JG 3, JG 54

Note: Wick's Bf 109 with an all-yellow nose had a white backplate - marked here with X

Variation 2
JG 2 (Wick), JG 27, B./JG 54

Yellow segment applied to top of rudder - August i.e. Schöpfel, JG 26 and Tiedmann, JG 3

Variation 3
ie: 'Assi' Hahn's Bf 109 E, I./JG 3

Uffz. Wolff, 3./JG 52

As per 'Assi' Hahn's
Bf 109 E of I./JG 3

Soft demarcation between forward edge of yellow and remainder of camouflage paint on rudder - i.e. Zimmermann's Bf 109 E

I./JG 3,
von Werra II./JG 3,
JG 26, 3./JG 52

RIGHT AND BELOW: A close-up view of the cockpit and spinner areas of a force-landed Bf 109 F-3 of JG 2 clearly showing the heavily applied green (RLM 70) brush or sponge stipple that was beginning to be applied by the ground crews of this unit at this time. The aircraft was damaged by machine gun bullets which penetrated the engine and cockpit side panels. The damage was so severe that the ground crews had to apply material was which led to an additional armoured glass panel being applied to the front windscreen on many aircraft. Note part of the JG 2 Röthföhren Geschwader badge below the cockpit which has been crudely stippled around.



BETWEEN: Claimed to be the aircraft of Werner Machold, this rare colour photograph showing an 'Achse's' tally of twenty-three victories, is believed to date from 28 or 29 August when III./JG 2 returned to Oerqueville from Calais. On 30 August Machold would increase his score to twenty-four with the claim for another victory near Portland.



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